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# THREE ESSAYS

ON THE

LEADING PRINCIPLES

OF

# THE REFORMATION:

ILLUSTRATING ITS

## CATHOLIC CHARACTER

FROM ITS

**Constitutional, Doctrinal, and Ritual History.**

BY

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## NOTICE.

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THE writer of the following short Essays has been asked to reprint them in a collected form from the pages of the "Ecclesiastic," in which periodical they originally appeared, with the view of drawing attention to a much neglected phase of Reformation History, the study of which seems especially to bear upon the occurrences of our own time. A few corrections have been made.

## ESSAY I.

### THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASPECT OF THE REFORMATION.

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ONE of the greatest gains which can be obtained for our libraries will be a History of the Reformation of the Church of England, written in the same spirit in which that great movement was undertaken. A great step towards such a work we may no doubt find in the hearty rummaging of contemporary records to which Mr. Froude and others of his class have devoted themselves ; but almost every work that has been written on that period impresses one with the feeling that it is the production of authors whose sympathies run much more in the direction of Presbyterianism than of those high Ecclesiastical theories on which the Reformers really built up their work. The earliest Reformers were those who most effectually stamped the Church of England with the characteristics which she possesses as a Reformed Church ; but these are generally spoken of as men who were cutting out a road in the midst of a mist of Popish prejudices ; and whose endeavours to stand and see and ask for the old paths required and received as much amendment, as the mediæval Church itself. It cannot be otherwise, so long as the history of our Church during that critical period is confided to the hands of those whose principles represent a school which was as much opposed by the Reformers as Rome itself ; and what we now want is a good Catholic history of the Reformation, in which it shall be judged by the actual words and deeds with which the Church and State consummated their work ; and judged by one who (since it is impossible for men to write on such a subject without taking a side) will take the side of the Church, in preference to the side of her Presbyterian or her Roman enemies.

To do this effectually is impossible for those who are content with the mere text of Burnet or Collier as their authorities. The overlying strata of subsequent events have so hidden the original form of that great cataclysm that its true outline can only be found by an examination of the data belonging to the period in which it was produced, and of such data it is reasonable to give the first

place in importance and authority to official or otherwise responsible documents. But the tendency of the day is to write history in the form of anecdote; to take up the popular theory of any period, and overlay it with a multitude of personal details which tell us next to nothing of real history; or to reproduce the biography of some individual whose name has become familiar to the ear from certain quite insignificant causes, and make a "representative man" out of one who has no claims whatever to be handed about in that character. A recent and talented Scotch lecturer, Dr. Tulloch, has fallen into this mistake in setting Latimer by the side of Luther, Calvin, and Knox, and taking him for the representative of our English Reformation in the same degree as the others are respectively of the German, Swiss, and Scotch.<sup>1</sup> One might as well take Dr. Sacheverel as the representative of the Church in Queen Anne's days. Latimer was a popular preacher, (chiefly because he was very eccentric and violent); he took his death bravely, and he gave his party a very useful *mot* in his last speech. This is almost all that need be said of him in a history of the Reformation which aims at representing things and men in their proper proportion; the exact measure of his power and influence on his generation being probably about the same as that of the fluent and popular preachers whose names are so often in the newspapers at the present day; but to whom no generation would entrust any important undertaking.

The fact is that a just view of the Reformation will not permit us to single out any individual as possessing so much influence over his times, and taking so prominent a place among his contemporaries, that he is entitled to be called the leader of the movement. Cranmer, who is often taken as the representative man of the English Reformation, is certainly less deserving of such a conspicuous place than Ridley. In a great position, the Archbishop could hardly fail to have some of the marks of greatness; but it was accident, not right, that gave him the position he held; and it is the accident of his position rather than any intellectual, much less any moral, power possessed by him which has made his name so famous in the history of his times. Ridley, on the other hand, was a man of much ability and great theological learning; and had he been Archbishop of Canterbury instead of Cranmer, it is probable that the course of the Reformation would have been characterised by much more firmness, and perhaps by a more definite theology, though it may be doubted whether the latter would have been so thoroughly orthodox as it might have been definite.

But a very few words are sufficient in commemorating the "Leaders of the Reformation," so far as England was concerned;

<sup>1</sup> In a volume entitled "Leaders of the Reformation," published by Blackwoods. It is a work which shows, however, a great revolution of opinion among the Presbyterians of Scotland, and a great advance in the right direction.



for there really were none. The Reformation in England was not the creature of any one individual's brain in its origin, or of any one man's policy in its progress. It was not the creature of public opinion either; for public opinion often tolerates the most gross abuses, religious, political, and social, until it is influenced by some cause outside of itself, which turns it in another direction: and there is much evidence to show that public opinion was pretty well satisfied with things as they were before the Reformation; very gradually veering round to a direction which supported things as they were made afterwards. There are, in fact, strong currents which arise from unseen causes, and carry whole nations, rulers and people alike, in their course; and it is to one of these psychical phenomena, and not to public opinion or any human leader, that the progress of the Reformation must be traced. Who can tell where they begin, or how? All one can conclude about them is that they owe their origin to those powers which are able to act with imperceptible yet mighty energy upon whole masses of minds, and to turn them by multitudes towards good or evil, according as it is God or the Enemy of God whose will is the spring of action. And amid all the evil with which the Enemy caused the English Reformation to be adulterated, there is ample reason to believe that the movement was spontaneous and unavoidable, and in the general course of its progress was obeying the guidance of God's providential order.

In support of this view I would call attention to the fact that the Reformation of the Church of England seems to have been almost entirely unaffected by the influence of the changes effected under Luther, Calvin, and Knox, who led the movement elsewhere. In spite of attempts, both from without and within the Church, as well abroad as at home, to bring those influences to bear upon the Universities and the country in general, there is hardly a trace of them to be found in the Prayer Book, which is our only dogmatic standard; and even in the Thirty-nine Articles, where, if anywhere, one would have expected to find the influence shown, the marks are more seeming than real. It has been attempted indeed to prove that, because some portions, and after all very unimportant portions—chiefly the Exhortations—of the Prayer Book, were derived from the continental reformers, therefore their influence was at work throughout; but *the whole substance of the services which it contains is evidence to the contrary*. It has been contended too, over and over again, that the Articles were drawn up in a decidedly Calvinistic sense; but as our theological knowledge has improved we have seen how untrue this is, and how often these very Articles made their way in direct opposition to Calvinistic influences, even when brought to bear upon them in the highest quarters. There is something very remarkable too in the absence of any name whatever as an authority in the official documents which accompany the

English Prayer Book and Bible. So far from Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, or any one else being the Father of the Reformation, these individuals might never have lived at all for anything that appears in those documents. If the English Reformation had owed anything to the foreign Reformers, common gratitude would have instinctively brought up some allusion to them, and yet there is no reference to them even in so discursive a production as the Preface to the Bible; while that of the Prayer Book distinctly asserts the leading principle of its reconstruction to have been a reference to antiquity, as indeed the Preface to the Bible also asserts in regard to the work of its translation. In fact, take whatever line of investigation we will, the endeavour to trace the character of the Reformation up to the strong will of any individual, English or foreign, will eminently fail. And not only so, but we shall probably be brought to the conclusion, that whenever any individual had succeeded, to any extent, in initiating a machinery by which the course of the Reformation should be turned aside and brought more within the range of his own personal bias, that individual became involved in difficulties and ruin, and ultimately gave up his life as a sacrifice to the just Nemesis which avenges every offence against the Providence of God. Such was the fate, to name no others, of Cranmer and Ridley, who both endeavoured to set Lady Jane Grey upon the throne, not because they thought her the lawful heir to the crown of England, but because they believed that the cause of the Reformation would be forwarded by her influence if she became sovereign, and retarded by that of Mary.

The only conclusion at which one can arrive is, that the Reformation of the Church of England, as it went on its way, was kept almost entirely independent of personal influence, so far as that influence deviated in any great degree from the course assigned to the Reformation by the Will higher than man's which is able to control all events, and mould them for good in spite of every difficulty thrown in the way by the opposing powers of evil.

The great change which goes by this name was in reality a congeries of events occurring in strict obedience to the providence of God, and which were made necessary even in the policy of man by the growth of evils of a very serious character. I shall endeavour to point out the nature of some of these evils and the results which followed their attempted remedy; and in so doing to mark the line which, in my humble opinion, ought to be taken by any writer who would try to supply the literary want spoken of in the beginning of this essay.

1. The supremacy of the Pope was a tenet against which the mind of England had for several centuries revolted. The growth of this power is one of the most marvellous phenomena of history, and in looking back upon the past stages of our national existence from our present standing ground, one is quite astounded at the extra-

vagant height which it was allowed to attain.<sup>1</sup> The official ideal of the Papal Supremacy is to be found in the pages of S. Thomas Aquinas and Bellarmine, and in the decrees of the Popes themselves. The terms of strictly official documents are no doubt sometimes unreal, as when, for example, our sovereigns for so many ages assumed to themselves the titular sovereignty of France, although they did not possess a foot of territory there. But they give at least the theory held by those who issue the documents, and unless that theory is nullified by a mild practical acquiescence in its absurdity, as in the instance named, assumptions of such a character must always be reckoned of importance. According to the authorities named then, it is found that the Pope assumes to possess, *ex jure Divino*, the most ample authority over the whole world, both in civil and in ecclesiastical matters;<sup>2</sup> his authority is the very apex of civil and ecclesiastical power;<sup>3</sup> and so completely does this authority override all other, that if any king is excommunicated on account of Apostasy (which means, in this case, separation from the Roman See) his subjects are, by the very fact of his excommunication, liberated from his rule and from their oaths of fidelity to him.<sup>4</sup> This universal authority is, moreover, of such a nature that by virtue of his position *jure divino*, "*ut supremum totius mundi regem*," he may exercise the privilege of an actual sovereign in levying taxes upon Christian people in every part of the world, and may even destroy fortresses and cities belonging to less universal sovereigns if he think such destruction conducive to the interests of the Church.<sup>5</sup>

This theory of the Papal Supremacy has been repudiated by Roman writers of lesser note, and seems too absurd ever to have been maintained by sensible men. It must be remembered, however, that it is the theory of the two greatest controversialists which the Roman Church can boast of, and that the reticence of the Popes and of the Council of Trent in respect to any counter theory, or any of more moderate character, would be, by itself, some indication that it was not discordant with the recognized official pretensions of the Roman see. It must also be borne in mind that this theory of the supremacy had often been illustrated by the decrees and practice of the Popes in their intercourse with Christian sovereigns and their subjects in the middle ages; and that Bellarmine was only transferring to his pages the common law (so to speak) of the Roman see, when he attributed to it these extra-

<sup>1</sup> The theory of giving to the Church an authorised protector and arbitrator, is, it must of course be admitted, very tempting. Constantine and Charlemagne had both striven, and that in good faith, to vindicate the position for themselves, and Hildebrand was only treading in their steps, when he succeeded in perpetuating in the Popedom what they held in their own persons.

<sup>2</sup> Bellarm. De potestate summi pontificis in rebus temporalibus, s. i.

<sup>3</sup> Thom. Aq. See Sec. qu. xliii. art. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. qu. xii. art. ii.

<sup>5</sup> Thom. Aq. de Reg. Princip. cx., cxix., quoted by Bellarm.

vagant pretensions. Beside which, in the very midst of the Reformation, when Pius V. excommunicated Queen Elizabeth for her "apostasy," he declared himself to be "Prince over all nations, and all kingdoms, having the right to pluck up, destroy, dissipate, ruin, plant, and build;" and possessing this high authority, he proceeds by virtue of it to deprive the Queen of her "pretended right" to her dominions, and to absolve all her subjects from their oath of allegiance. This was the traditional tone of the Roman see, and whatever opinions may have been expressed by writers on that side since the Reformation, none but the direct opponents of the Papal power ever ventured to express a doubt as to the legitimate character of such assumptions in the times which preceded. Circumstances did indeed occur which prevented the execution of this decree of Pius V.; but there can be no doubt that the intention and meaning of it strictly coincided with the theory afterwards propounded by Bellarmine; and it was by no fault of the Popes or their supporters that the practice and the theory were so far from being coextensive.

With our modern notions, and especially our English constitutional notions, it seems quite impossible that such a doctrine as this could ever be admitted by the ruling powers of our country. But, although in its extreme application, as exhibited in the case of King John, it was indignantly repudiated by some of our most spirited monarchs, there can be no doubt that it was admitted to a very wide extent by both monarchs and people, for several centuries after the Conquest. The power of the Popes had, in fact, become at length greater in England than in any other country of Europe; and the almost reckless exercise of that power was the principal cause which led to the Reformation, as it was the chief reason by which the Reformation is to be justified. It is obvious to remark that the claim to Political Supremacy is now silently ignored by all European States, which proceed on their course without the least regard to the will of the Pope. The English nation then only did what France, and Austria, and Spain, and Sardinia have since done.

It is not meant to assert that, in the heat of the battle, or even while the troops were deploying into line, each individual supporter of the Reformation saw clearly the causes which originated and justified the struggle in which he was engaged. Far from it. The position at the outset of this essay was, that the Reformers were led on by an instinctive rather than by a reasoning impulse, and that their instinctive impulse was one of those providential forces which we must trace chiefly by their results. And, surely, if the independence of nations is a part of God's order in the world, as there seems every reason to believe, there was so manifest a contrariety to that order in the operation of the Papal Supremacy in England as fully to call for His interposition. Nor does this view require us to deny that the power of the Pope was often beneficially

exercised. It is the prerogative of God to employ all kinds of agents and instruments for His purposes.

2. Again, the loss of Nationality in the clergy, which was the necessary result of the Supremacy, must be considered as an important infringement of the laws by which God governs the world. I do not pretend that the principle of nationality is one that may be admitted without restriction, but who does not believe its existence to be decidedly according to the mind of God? But if we look through the pages of English History we shall find that it was only under the strong rule of such monarchs as Edward the First and Edward the Third, that the clergy as a body declined to take the Pope's side when the interests of the nation were at stake. If, indeed, the Papacy had been an abstract spirituality, entirely free from any contact with secular rule or secular interests, this might not have been so disadvantageous to the country; but since the spiritual authority of the Popes was always entangled with many secular interests—those of his own secular rule or those of continental kingdoms—it is clear that a dutiful and unswerving allegiance to him on the part of the English clergy must very frequently indeed have made them forget their position as English citizens.

Looking back, therefore, upon the provocatives, so to call them, of the Reformation, we may perhaps consider this not the least of such provocatives, that the theory and the practical results of the Papal supremacy were alike inconsistent with loyalty, on the part of those who were bound by it, to the national independence of England. And when we see, as we now do, how great a work that national independence was to achieve in the world, it may reasonably be believed that the more perfect establishment of it was one of the purposes of Divine wisdom in causing the authority of the Pope in England to be annulled. The evidence of past history justifies the conclusion that the independence of separate nations, distinguished from each other by geographical situation, by origin, language, and other natural peculiarities, is a privilege and a blessing vouchsafed by the Ruler of all, neither to be lightly esteemed by those on whom it is bestowed, nor to be justifiably broken in upon by others. Often forfeited by national sins, far oftener has it been almost miraculously preserved when He Who gave it saw not fit that it should be forfeited. And although there are cases in which, as in India at this time, the imperceptible flow of events is so ordered that national independence passes away, to be replaced by the wiser and better rule of a great and comprehensive Empire, it is seldom that one Christian power is permitted for any time to subjugate another, without some nemesis appearing, both to mark the transgression against the laws of Providence, and also to annul the effects of the crime. When, therefore, we observe these two historical phenomena,—on the one hand the culminating power of the Roman see in England, and on the other the silent upgrowth

of a national instinct by which resistance to it was enforced,—we must trace in them the error of man and the correcting hand of God. A philosophical reader of history will perhaps think also with me, that the revising Hand was interposed not less for the advantage of the spiritual power of the Pope than for the benefit of the English Church and nation. One or two centuries more of provocation on the part of the former would probably have led to an aggressive Reformation on the part of England, as well as a defensive one; and, as the experience of the hour shows us, England must be regarded as holding in her hands the power of deciding whether or not the Bishop of Rome shall preserve that temporal sovereignty by which, as is pretty generally acknowledged, his ecclesiastical authority is sustained. If she is called upon to defend the position which the Pope holds as an European power, it will not be the first time that she has done so since the Reformation. But if the Reformation had been delayed for one or two centuries, it is probable that the whole force of England's power would have been raised in an aggressive assault upon the Pope, as was that of France in the days of Napoleon the First; and the addition of England to the enemies of the Papacy would then have been the addition of the one element by which its destruction would have been accomplished.

3. Again it is to be considered that the Reformation was the starting point of a great change in the political organization—we will use the phrase in a higher sense than that of the newspapers—of the world. Constitutional liberty is a good thing, however much the name may have become odious through its connexion with 1688, with Whig and Radical demagogues, and with out-at-elbows foreigners. Those who doubt the advantages of constitutional liberty should try and realise to themselves the actual condition of all but a few powerful classes under the government of an ultra-monarchical system. It may be described in a few words as being most often a system in which there was no middle ground between tyranny and licence; the system, in fact, of an ill-regulated family, in which extreme restraint and heavy punishments are supposed to be counterbalanced by extravagant indulgence, the distribution of each of these respectively being a matter rather of chance than of a deliberate attempt at justice. Now, notwithstanding the severe rule of the Tudors, it must be allowed that the era of the Reformation was the beginning of real constitutional liberty, at least in England. It is unnecessary to argue the point at length, as probably all those who will think it worth while to read these pages will agree with me: and if there are among them any who would limit the term to the changes made at and since the Revolution of 1688, I really must beg to decline entering the lists, even in imagination, with persons who

form their opinions on so very unhistoric a foundation. Assuming then that constitutional liberty takes its rise in England from the days of the Reformation, and that it is a blessing for which we may well be thankful to Him by Whom kings reign, I ask whether there is the faintest probability that this could have co-existed with that exercise of the Pope's authority in England which forms so prominent and characteristic a feature in pre-Reformation government? That it was a consequence of the Reformation I by no means wish to maintain, but only that the change in the ecclesiastical condition of England was contemporary in its origin and development with the social and political reformation of our constitution. They were as two streams running parallel to each other in the same direction, subject to the same forces, but yet not mingling their waters. But even accounting the constitutional liberty which has been handed down to us, with gradual accretions, from the seventeenth century, as no way connected directly with the religious movement which threw aside the Pope's authority in England, it is perfectly evident that the retention of that authority would have hindered and even stifled any development of those principles on which our present mode of government is founded. And if, in the Providence of God, England was to offer to the world the spectacle of a mighty and enduring empire founded and built up on infinitely more Christian and humane principles of civil order than any empire hitherto known, it was an absolute necessity that she should first be perfectly set free from the embarrassing connection she had long been forced to maintain with a power which inherited the principles as well as the name of as tyrannical an empire as the ages of the world had seen.<sup>1</sup>

It seems almost too childish a folly for any one, in these days, to deny that our country had a perfect right to the possession of this entire independence. And yet persons have been heard to argue, even in our own generation, that the Reformation was a thoroughly unjustifiable step on the part of England. The fact is, that it has been too much the habit to take a mere surface view of that great event: and in justifiable regrets for the loss of unity attributed to the Reformation, in indignation at the miserable con-

<sup>1</sup> Nothing has been said above of some other galling results of the Papal authority in England, which were almost enough in themselves to have brought about its expulsion as soon as the country came to its senses after the Wars of the Roses. There was, for example, the drain of money from the kingdom for purposes which contributed neither to its spiritual nor its secular advantage. A large proportion of the monastic income so basely alienated by Henry VIII. was really the income of the Pope, in the shape of taxes levied by him upon those who submitted to make themselves, so far, his subjects. Wycliffe used to say that a hill of gold would soon be worn away by the payments required for the Pope; and the hyperbole of the sturdy demagogue is very much corroborated by the more formal complaints existing in documentary evidence, which show that the patience of the whole land, clergy and laity alike, was overstrained by these extortions.

duct of Henry VIII., and in somewhat unfair comparisons between the condition of our own Church before and since that time, the real principles which underlie the Reformation itself have been lost sight of, and such language used respecting it as assumes that it was a wilful and wanton rebellion against lawful authority. This mistake has been fostered by the ordinary superficialness of Protestant and popular writers on the subject. To them the foam and scum that floats on the surface of the stream is not merely a sign showing the strength of the current flowing beneath, it is the very substance of the stream. The coarse and flippant declamation of popular preachers like Latimer, the noisy pamphlets in which his literary compeers decried all Catholic principles as much as they assailed the "Enormities of the Bishoppe of Rome," the Puritan fables of Foxe's Martyrology, and many such like effusions for which Churchmen hold themselves not at all or very slightly responsible:—these were the scum brought to the surface by a deep and strong stream coming into contact with opposing obstacles over and through which it rolled with irresistible power. They hardly made their appearance till the work was done; certainly the doing of it was not theirs. And while it must be acknowledged that these frothy writers have formed the traditions of the Reformation as they are held by the large bulk of Protestants in later days, it ought to be clearly seen by the student of history that what they originated and gave force to was not the Reformation, but that Puritan licence to which the Reformation had to present as firm a front as it did to the older traditions of the Papal system.

The false tradition of the Reformation thus handed down has formed a floating and impalpable atmosphere around even those who would be unlikely to be influenced directly by any one of the writers with whom it has originated: and a work that is much wanted is such a one as was before referred to—a work that will not only show the wrongs which justified Englishmen in the repudiation of the Papal system, but also justify the Reformers by a detailed reference to their authentic and official acts in the several stages of their labours. It would then be seen that, amidst all the embarrassments arising from the novelty of that work, from the interference and forced co-operation of men whose objects were either altogether illegitimate, or else very different from those sought in the Reformation, they went on steadily in a straightforward course, setting a certain object before them, and feeling their way gradually towards it. All the difficulty involved in the careful reconstruction of the Ecclesiastical system of England, entirely free from the foreign and denationalizing elements which had been interwoven with it, and yet retaining as much as possible of what was Catholic, was surmounted by them with a wisdom and courage so great that they cannot but command our respect.



Let us now then look at some of the official acts by which the Reformation was really consummated;<sup>1</sup> for it is these documents alone that can decide the questions at issue on the subject.

The first thing to be noticed in such a review is the mode in which the Papal supremacy was abolished. This abolition was by no means a hasty or an ill-considered measure. All parties seemed to feel that the question was an intricate one, and that it was only safe to approach it with measured steps, and a deliberate knowledge both of the grounds on which action was to be taken, and also of the consequences which would result. For centuries there had been a struggling under-current of discontent with the Pope's authority, and occasionally this under-current had worked its way up to the surface, as in the matter of Investitures, and the Legates; but there had never hitherto been any strong personal motive urging the Sovereign as well as the Commons of England to oppose *in toto* the exercise of that authority. Such a motive, in Henry VIII.'s case, seems to have been the means by which the opposing instinct of the nation was brought to a focus. But whatever the King's personal motives and intentions were,—the former being connected with the divorce, and the latter looking forward to a transference of the Pope's authority to himself,—no impartial reader of history can fail to see how gradually and justly all the measures were taken, so far as the Church and nation were concerned, for bringing about the abolition of the Pope's jurisdiction over England.

The respective stages by which the official renunciation and expulsion of this jurisdiction was accomplished in Henry's reign occupied about four years and a half. The first decided attempt made at limiting the power of the Pope during that reign was in 1530, when, in an Act of Parliament against pluralities, (21 Hen. VIII. c. 13,) a clause was inserted forbidding the application of any person to Rome for dispensation from the operation of the law. The serving out such a dispensation was to be met by a penalty of £70, beside the loss of all profits pretended to be secured by its means. A dispensation from Rome for non-residence was also declared void and of none effect, and subject to a penalty of £20. These two clauses aimed at two glaring practical abuses of the Papal power, by which the higher clergy, and especially foreigners, were permitted to hold a number of benefices together, perhaps without serving any; and it was a real reformation in the Church for such a wretched system to be abolished. The marvel is that an abuse

<sup>1</sup> The dissolution of monasteries cannot fairly be regarded as a part of the Reformation. Indeed the work had begun more than two centuries before, in the confiscation of the property of the Knight-Templars. There can be little doubt that what Henry did originated in the necessities of his Exchequer; and that, however much it assisted in establishing the Reformation on a firmer basis than it might otherwise have possessed, none of those concerned in the dissolution had the least real sympathy with the objects sought for and ultimately obtained by the Reformers.

of this kind could ever have sprung up in the land, and that it had not been put an end to many years before the personal enmity between Pope and King suggested such an attack on the strong out-works of the Papal jurisdiction.

In the following year, in the Parliament of 1531—2, another step was taken, or rather preparations made for its being taken at a future day. Large sums of money were annually sent out of England for the purchase of privileges from Rome, and in the form of direct taxes. Among these were the “annates,” or first-fruits of Bishoprics; sums of money paid by every Bishop on first coming to his see, for obtaining leave from the Pope to occupy it. Although Bishops do not die every day, the sum received by the Pope on this account alone amounted to an average of £3,500 per annum for the twenty-three sees of England and Wales, or £160,000 from the beginning of Henry VII.’s reign up to this date in that of his son! That the Parliament of the country should endeavour to stop the export of so large an amount of treasure from the country was both natural and just; and the manner in which they carried out their intentions is remarkable for its fairness and honourable good feeling. Although it was maintained that the whole tax was an abuse, arising out of one levied for a very different object, the maintaining of forces against the Infidels, yet they offered to compromise the matter with the Pope, rather than proceed to “extremities;” sending to him a request that he would moderate these exactions, and come to an agreement as to some equitable fees, at the rate of five per cent. on the value of the see, or some similar valuation, in return for the bulls by which he gave his assent to the appointment of the Bishops. For the quiet settlement of Cranmer in the see of Canterbury, no fewer than eleven of these Papal bulls were required, so that it really seems as if they were multiplied for no other object but to increase the amount of tax to be levied. The justice and reasonableness of such a measure seems so plain to us at this day, that one is astonished at the want of courtesy and good policy shown by the Pope in taking no notice of the proposal made. The consequence was, of course, (in the then state of things,) that judgment went by default; and the time left open for compromise having expired, the Act abolishing the payments of annates to the Pope was ratified and confirmed about April or May, two years after it had been passed, that is, in 1534. Surely nothing could be more justifiable than this act: nor could it have been passed in a less offensive manner.

In the next year, 1533, another Act of Parliament was passed against appeals to Rome from the Church Courts of England. No doubt this was a personal matter as far as the King was concerned, and probably brought about through his influence; but the absolute justice of the Act is strikingly illustrated by the very terms in which it is drawn up. After affirming that England is an inde-

pendent state, having courts of justice competent both in authority and learning to decide all causes without application to foreign powers, it goes on to state that this is especially the case with "that part of the said body politic called the spirituality, or the English Church," which has always been found upon trial to be possessed of sufficient learning and integrity to determine all doubts that might arise, and to administer such offices and duties as belong to courts of the kind aimed at. "Several appeals," the Act goes on to say, "have been made to the see of Rome, in causes testamentary and matrimonial, in divorces, rights of tithes, oblations and obventions, to the delay of justice and the great vexation and charge of the King's Highness and his subjects. And forasmuch as the distance from Rome is such, that proof and evidence relating to a cause cannot be brought thither without great inconvenience, for which reasons many persons are forced to suffer in their rights, and sit down without remedy," it is finally decreed that all causes shall be determined in Courts of the King's own jurisdiction; and persons making appeals to Rome, or procuring censures from Rome on account of decisions in the King's Courts, are to be liable to the penalty of *præmunire*. In these days, when we habitually look up to our Sovereign as the supreme fountain of earthly justice for every one of her subjects, is it not with as much indignation as surprise that we contemplate the state of vassalage to a foreign power—*nominally* a spiritual one only—which is thus indicated as the practical condition of England before the much maligned Reformation? We may not like the name of Protestant, as the name goes; but if protesting against such abuses as these had been the cause of the cognomen being first assumed, we need none of us care to disclaim it.

The divorce cause of Henry VIII. was so much a personal matter in respect to the technical processes concerned, that, although questions and events of permanent national importance arose out of it, the Church historian might be justified in passing it over without regarding it as any portion of the official Reformation. There are, however, some points worth notice in connection with the view we are taking of those eventful days. Without discussing the merits of the question, it is worth observing, for instance, that there was an evident desire on the part of Henry to have the whole process conducted in the most strictly legal manner. From this motive alone it was that he allowed six years to pass away in illustrating the inconvenience of appeals to an authority so distant and so difficult of legal access. And up to the very last moment, instead of openly breaking with the Pope, he endeavoured by a great concession to obtain his decision in the cause. As is well known, Henry sent terms to Rome, or rather the ratification of terms previously agreed upon and approved there, by which the whole question was practically put into the hands of the Pope. The bearer of these

terms, being delayed in his journey by the snow, did not arrive at Rome until two days after the time agreed upon had expired; and so great was the impatience of the Pope to consummate the quarrel, that, against the earnest remonstrance of the Archbishop of Paris, who was acting as mediator, he passed the final sentence, decreeing the excommunication of the King and interdict of the kingdom to follow within three months; when all subjects were released from their allegiance, and the Emperor of Germany was to carry out the Pope's sentence by invading England. Was anything but the total abolition of the Pope's jurisdiction in England possible after such an indignity? No wonder that Henry had fortified himself, by anticipation, behind an appeal to a General Council, when such measures as these were anticipated. Such an appeal preserved him at least the position of a Christian monarch, until the Council confirmed the sentence passed on him; and enabled him to maintain his authority over his subjects, ecclesiastics and laymen, without outraging their religious feelings.<sup>1</sup>

It was then that the final extinction of the Papal supremacy was determined on. But how was that extinction effected? Not by any tyrannical act of a monarch ready enough for deeds of tyranny; not even by an authoritative Act of Parliament. The question was first of all submitted to the proper Council of the Church, the Convocations of Canterbury and York. On March 31, 1534, both houses of the former Convocation decided (Gardiner, Bonner, Fisher, Tunstal, and other such Bishops forming the upper house) "*Quod Romanus Episcopus non habet majorem jurisdictionem sibi a Deo collatam in hoc regno quam alius quivis externus Episcopus.*" On June 1, 1534, the Convocation of York came—and not hastily—to the same decision. And so general was the conviction of the clergy on this point, that hardly any, if any, declined this renunciation of the Pope's authority. When the documents belonging to the Convocation house were yet existing, Wharton, the ecclesiastical antiquary, found the subscriptions of all the bishops, chapters, abbots, &c., of thirteen dioceses, and affirmed that those of the remaining dioceses were to his certain knowledge in existence elsewhere. This general assent is also confirmed by the fact that scarcely any one was found to maintain the doctrine of the Papal supremacy. Such men as Friar Peto and Elstow would run any risk in warning the King against what they thought an adulterous marriage; and there were many as ready as they to suffer martyrdom for a sufficient cause. But hardly a voice was raised—not even the voices of More and Fisher—in favour of the Pope's supremacy, however unwilling they might be to accept its substitute: so completely was the mind of England set against the con-

<sup>1</sup> Cranmer also appealed to a General Council: and the reiteration of such appeals goes far, by itself alone, to put the Pope in the wrong, as regards the Church of England.

tinued exercise of that usurped authority. It is even more to the point that this acquiescence and agreement was not the result of hasty passion and indignation, but that it was, as has been shown, a deliberate conviction, arrived at after careful consideration, and though consummated by the Church's synods, forming only the final link in a chain of regular and national legislation. The securing of a really competent Court of Appeal, which shall be free from local and temporary prejudices, is one of the highest feats of legislative skill. Nor can there be any antecedent surprise felt that such a Court should have been originally sought at Rome. It was a question, at first, only of order and expediency; and when the expedient failed to answer, there was nothing more natural than that it should be abolished.

Let us pass now to opposite ground, and reconnoitre the clergy in their acceptance of the king's supremacy *vice* the supremacy of the Pope. And here, too, we find equal reasons for concluding that every step in the Reformation was taken advisedly, and not without much consideration of the consequences that would follow. There was a difficulty in this case which had not occurred in the other: and that was in the extreme demands of the king. Henry was far from being ignorant of theology, but yet he seems to have had confused notions as to the respective provinces of temporal and spiritual jurisdiction. Upon the renunciation of the Pope's supremacy in England, he evidently wished to transfer to the Crown all the authority which had previously been exercised by the Bishop of Rome. So far as all reasonable taxes on ecclesiastical revenue were concerned this was nothing but right. It was but right also that when appeals to that distant authority were abolished, those who would otherwise have appealed should acknowledge the King to be the supreme fountain of justice, whose duty it was to see that no wrong was permitted either in causes ecclesiastical or civil.

Henry assumed, however, as is well known, the title of "Supreme Head of the Church of England." When the clergy in Convocation were required to acknowledge and subscribe to this new title proposed in the form "*Ecclesiæ et Cleri Anglicani ejus Protector et supremum Caput is solus est,*" they rigidly refused to assent to it, even after three days of pressure while they were lying under the penalty of the *præmunire* on account of Wolsey's exercise of legatine authority. The King then allowed the title to be submitted to them with the qualification "after God, supreme Head," &c., but even this could not reconcile the consciences of the clergy. In the end, as is well known, the document (a money bill) in which the title was to be inserted, was sent up to the King with the modified clause "*quantum per legem Christi licet, supremum caput,*" a modification to which a majority of the members of Convocation assented willingly, though regretting the King's assumption of the title in any form. The proceedings of the Con-

vocation of Canterbury were carried on so privately—apparently through Cranmer's fear of exciting the King's further anger—that nothing is known certainly of the arguments used on either side. But in that of York, Bishop Tonstal, (president, on account of a vacancy in the see of York,) protested against the title in terms which seem to contain the whole argument from that side of the question; and his protest is so instructive that it will be well to give the substance of it as an illustration of the assertion that much wise forethought was exercised in this stage of the Reformation. This good and wise Bishop wrote to the effect that if the title meant only that the Sovereign is head in his own dominions, under CHRIST, and in this particular case of the clergy, their head in temporal matters as the head of all his other subjects, then they were all agreed on the subject, only wishing that more definite language should be used. On the other hand, if it was intended that the King was supreme head in spiritual matters as fully as in temporal, they believed such an assumption to be contrary to Catholic doctrine. And although "*quantum per Christi legem licet*" was a qualifying clause, yet "*Supreme Head of the Church*" had so complicated and mysterious a meaning that they thought it exceedingly capable of misconstruction and very likely to scandalize weak brethren. There is little room for doubt that the resistance of the clergy to this title, even while they were in a position of much difficulty and danger, exercised a wholesome restraint upon the King, and prevented him from going the full length that he otherwise would have done in personal interference in the government of the Church. It was, moreover, fully justified by Queen Elizabeth when she refused to assume the title, even with its qualifying clause, and so finally caused it to disappear from among the prerogatives claimed by the English crown.

In taking this very cursory review of the actual steps by which that was brought about which was really the most important of all the changes effected at the Reformation, I have not been careful to point out the respective shares which the three estates of the realm had in it, nor the cases in which any one opposed measures attempted by the others. We started with the assumption that the whole course of the Reformation may be proved by its progress and by its results to have been providential: and we have had to look rather, therefore, at the measures as a whole, than at the instruments by whom they were brought about. A very important feature in the government of the universe is the providential balancing of one force by another: and this is as true in the moral as in the natural world. If, therefore, contentions are observed between the several powers of the constitution in the course of the Reformation, we may probably find an illustration in them of that balance of which I speak. Certainly among all the errors committed or nearly committed, whether by the civil or the ecclesiastical body,

there are none which need lower either body in our respect. They were but the mistakes of men who were too much in the midst of the crowding events to see clearly what was the true general bearing of the whole. If the civil legislature sometimes wished to exceed their province, and became violent in their dealings with the Church, we can hardly wonder when it is seen how grievous was the nature of the abuses which they had to reform. If the clergy were thought at the time by some good men over tenacious about their rights, no sound Churchman can now hesitate to admit that they were influenced by a truly prophetic wisdom.

As it was, the sturdy conservatism of the clergy was the great bulwark against licence, and if they did commit errors in endeavouring to maintain the *status quo*, we may yet look on them as the Providential counterbalance to that swingeing desire for change which often carries on a body of secular rulers in a course of recklessness to which such a curb is exceedingly useful.

## ESSAY II.

## THE DOCTRINAL ASPECT OF THE REFORMATION.

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I. THERE is an *a priori* view of this phase of our ecclesiastical history which has received very little attention from historical writers : or at least very little of that attention which would have prepared them for a just estimation of things in their subsequent course. When a change is made, and we want to record the history of the change, and “all about it,” the first question to be asked,—at least when we get beyond the region of bare facts—is “Why was there a change at all?” I once knew a cynical fellow who was the terror of all his feminine acquaintances on account of an inconvenient habit which he had cultivated of always asking them “the reason why” when they indulged in the illogical assertions and opinions to which the more critical half of humanity declares ladies are so prone : and really one cannot but think the historic muse of the English Church would have been improved in her character, if she had years ago been subjected to this trilateral form of persecution instead of being allowed so long to act on theories of “instinctive feeling.” If a thinking man, reading for the first time the history of the English Reformation, were to have no other account set before him than that which has been stereotyped from the pages of our ordinary writers, one of the most puzzling reflections that this account would raise in his mind would be that a whole nation, (including many intellectual persons in an intellectual age) should so entirely change its religious opinions in the manner in which it is commonly represented to have done : and that this change should have been made on so very superficial an investigation of principles. He would probably come to the conclusion that the age of the Reformation, with all its intellect, was a very light-minded one, and much more open to the influence of prejudice than reason : but his conclusions, though justly formed from his historical informants, would be very decidedly wrong—at least as regards the intellectual Churchmen of the day—and he would require to be told that no history was ever so superficially written as that of the doctrinal Reformation in the Church of England.

Let me then endeavour to trace out more justly the outline of



these changes; and this, not in a self-confident spirit as if entrusted with a special mission to correct all who have trodden the same path of history before; but rather with the view of submitting certain theories on the subject to the judgment and consideration of thoughtful readers.

It is usual to carry back the "first dawn of the Reformation" to the days of Wicliffe and the Lollards, on the hypothesis that the subsequent acts of the Church in the sixteenth century were the proper complement of the Wicliffite revolution attempted in the fourteenth. There is not, however, as far as I know, the least ground for supposing that the leading Reformers were at all influenced by the writings of Wicliffe; nor indeed that these writings were at all well known to them. Subsequent centuries have disinterred this sturdy Protestant from the oblivion into which he had fallen; and his name has become so familiar that it seems impossible to many that it could have been otherwise than a household word in the times we are thinking of. But this was not the case, as Mr. Froude will probably be as ready to maintain as the present writer. With his death, nearly all Wicliffe's influence for good passed away; and whatever religion there may have been in the would-be reformer himself, his followers have little more claim to the name of reformers than the Chartists of modern days have. To my mind the small results which followed from Wicliffe's *religious* teaching and the troubles that ensued from his political teaching prove how little of real solid value there was in the agitation of which he was the head; how little, in fact, it was supported by Divine Providence. His great enmity against the evils of the monastic system was by no means peculiar to himself, for there were always wise men who saw that the abuses of that system by some were so gross, that they placed the whole body of those who lived without abuse under it in danger, as well as themselves. And, in short, very little of Wicliffe's survived his death, except the very dangerous principles on political matters which he held rather as theoretical crotchets than in any other way, but which his followers (including Wat Tyler's mob of 100,000) would gladly have carried into practice. The people who looked to him as their teacher were simply such as were attracted by those levelling doctrines which seemed to them the remedy for great miseries entailed on a suffering nation by the wars of rival sovereigns. The religious peculiarities, which were to him the very substance of his system, were to them mere makeweights. And while the latter were dropped as soon as his personal influence was withdrawn, (or maintained in a distorted form by some as a cloak for the more severely punishable rebellion which they disguised) the former took deep root, and were the real cause of much of that licence by which the Reformation was disfigured.

A just historian will not, therefore, fall in with the popular

notion that the Reformation of doctrine in the sixteenth century was built up on Wicliffe's principles, or had grown out of his work. There was, no doubt, a living tradition of his name in connection with the Lollards, and with the anti-Roman party in general ; but it is hardly true that he contributed in any appreciable degree to that stirring up of men's minds which resulted in the separation of Rome from England, and the leaving the latter to stand alone among the Catholic Churches of Europe. If we ask, therefore, why the Reformers thought at all about any review or re-modelling of the doctrinal standards and usages of the Church of England, it will not do to answer that it was because Wicliffe had broken the ground for them, showed them the way, and in a manner, compelled them to follow. We must look elsewhere for the reason.

And in the reformation of doctrine, as in the constitutional reformation, we find further indications of that over-ruling Hand, which was fashioning anew the destinies of our Church and country. It is not possible to point to one individual actively concerned in the transactions of the day, and say that the doctrines of the Reformed Church were a reflex of his mind. But it is possible to show that the general tendency of events in their relation to the Church was such as very exactly to coincide with the result produced ; and we cannot fail to see in such a coincidence an indication of the real Power which was at work, ordering the course of this world for the good of His Church, raising up men to do His work, and *while they were doing only that* protecting them from harm ; placing barriers in the way of those who would have hindered all change, and suffering the removal of His own instruments where they sought to carry changes beyond the limits of His unchanging truth.

The truest way of philosophising history is to endeavour first of all to trace out the course of Providential arrangement in the temporary character and results of actual events : and if they are long past, in their subsequent results also. Let us apply this principle to the case before us, and it will be found, I believe, that the following causes contributed principally to suggest and to cause a review and reconstruction of our doctrinal system.

1. A necessity for services in the vernacular had been developing itself strongly for some time, with, probably, a great accession of strength since the general adoption of the printing-press. To the Church belongs the glory of first using that art by which the intellectual progress of mankind has been so wonderfully accelerated, the *first printed book* being the Latin *Bible* printed at Mentz in 1456, and afterwards named (from the Mazarin Library at Paris, the place of its first disinterment in the last century) the Mazarin Bible : and the second known, a *Psalter* printed in the year following. Though many religious books were printed in Germany during the following twenty years, the art was not introduced into

England until 1474, but it is probable that portions of the Bible in Latin, the Breviary and Missal (of the latter of which early printed copies exist) were among its first productions. These, printed at first in small number, must have at once suggested a very large increase in the number of copies; and the usual reaction of supply and demand would be certain to promote their production. So wide a circulation of books used in the face of all the people week by week must as certainly have suggested to many minds that the people at large had an interest in them, and that the new art of printing should be made really useful to them in the practice of their religion. Indeed, two small hornbooks were not long since discovered underneath some ancient chancel stalls, on one of which there yet remained portions of an English *printed* version of the Creed, the LORD'S Prayer, and the Ave Maria of a very early date, and this in a quite obscure village church, dependent, at the Reformation, on the monastery of Ramsey. These portions of the service had been used by the people in English for a long period, and for a longer, in Anglo-Saxon; and as is well known, the Litany was also commonly in use by them in their own language for at least a hundred years before the Reformation.<sup>1</sup> The evident anxiety of the Church, therefore, to use the new art of printing, and the growing literary intelligence of the people, were combining together to make a Vernacular Bible and Prayer Book an absolute necessity of the age, the introduction of which no opposition could long hinder. It appears that vernacular services have lately become quite common among English Roman Catholics, and I presume their introduction has arisen from the conviction that it is impossible to carry the English people with you in the use of a Liturgy written in a tongue unknown to them. What a marvel it is that when once a step was made in that direction the point should not have been at once yielded, and as much alacrity shown in the use of the native language as soon as it had really come into existence, as in the use of the printing press! The use of an universal language by the Church, when the dialects of Europe had not yet taken a settled form; or when, as in England, several different tongues were spoken by the several classes of society, was probably wise and proper: but it is simple folly to censure the change of language which was effected in our services at the Reformation when that anomaly had passed away and a new state of things had arisen. The careful and thorough translation of the Holy Bible, and (with its re-construction) the translation of our Prayer Book, was no act of man's wilfulness, enmity, or self-love. It was an act done in obedience to a necessity that had arisen in the providential course of events, and later events would seem to show that these translations have had much to do in fixing the national mind and character, whereby the Church and language of England are to

<sup>1</sup> See also page 46.

do for the last ages of the Christian world, what the Roman Church and the Latin tongue did for the first. The Church itself was henceforth to have a peculiarity of character not evident in times when so many of its distinctive features were dropped, as in the last age, but evident enough at the Reformation and now. It was to be Catholic, in doctrine, ceremony, and discipline, yet not Roman; and was no longer to bear the impress of the old effete Empire. In this point of view we must needs regard the step now under consideration as embodying a great idea; for the language then so new and so limited in its uses is one which these later ages have proved to be capable of even greater extension than the ancient tongue of Rome itself: and from being based on the old Saxon, and yet so enriched and modified by the incorporation of foreign words, it seems to approach nearer to the requirements of an universal language than any other, and is already spoken by a larger proportion of the civilized world, than perhaps any one language has been since the confusion of Babel.

The most important step of changing the ecclesiastical language of the country was then one which was both necessary for the times according to man's wisdom, and also one which held a prominent place, as subsequent history proves, in the providential mission of the Church of England. It may be that the full value of the change has not even yet been developed; but that missionary work will make very much more rapid progress when the use of our own language as *the vehicle of native thought* both in the offices of devotion, and also in ordinary instruction, shall be made a first principle of Indian and other churches.

2. The very means which had been taken by Rome to secure uniformity of doctrine in all churches in communion with her, was also that by which a review of her standard would be provoked. Every thing was made to rest, officially at least, on the mere authority of Rome. The Pope was the final point of appeal in all disputed cases, and the fountain of dogma in every instance of doubt. The Pope had decreed what was orthodox, and what was not,—no matter if he contradicted his predecessors,—*causa finita est*. When men's minds were shaken in their confidence towards the Pope's supremacy, (and, as I have already shown, it would have been most unreasonable if they had not been so shaken,) then all that had been made to rest so entirely on the same authority began also to be matter of question. It was clearly seen at last, that a great wrong had been done to the Church universal by the usurpation of an authority which had no foundation in reason or right; and what more natural than for men to ask, Is he who has made so great a mistake, or done so great an injustice in this matter of the supremacy certainly so incapable of error, of untruth, even of misbelief in matters of doctrine? It was impossible for those who felt strongly on the constitutional question, as we may

call it, of the Church,—and every clear-sighted and honest man did feel strongly about it when once stirred, however much he might have acquiesced in the established order of things before,—it was, impossible, I repeat, for such men to have the same religious or theological confidence in the system of doctrine which had been made so distinctively Papal, as he would if the supremacy had never been claimed or exercised, or if the system had been secured on a Catholic instead of on a Papal basis of authority. It is very probable, too, that the secular and even Pagan character of the court of Rome in the time of Leo X. did much in the same direction towards weakening the respect of Englishmen for the Pope's dogmatic authority. And certainly it must have required either large faith or large indifference to trust without doubt in the absolute orthodoxy of the final court to which Christendom was then accustomed to appeal. We need not be revilers of the Popes of Rome ancient or modern, but we must not lose sight of those elements in the papacy which provoked and justified, if there had not been justification enough on other grounds, a great exercise of independent judgment on the part of the English Church. Viewing this movement historically we must see that it was essentially "English." Nevertheless England was discharging a duty to the Church Catholic also, and if she is true to the "pattern" which has been providentially worked out in her, and will eschew all mere Protestant theories, this her character will eventually be thankfully recognised by all Christendom.

3. The course of controversy originated a school of original thought of which there are very small traces before the Reformation, but which in fact was the real source of strength to our Church in the reconstruction of our doctrinal system. By original thought, I do not, of course, mean the self-sufficiency which looks upon the authority of preceding times as worthless. Had the Reformers been men of this sort, the Church of England would have been very different from what it is. What I mean is, a school of thinkers who were not to be frightened out of the use of their reason by an appeal to recent traditional authorities; and who had sufficient confidence in the gift of intelligence with which God had blessed them to track every stream up to its source, if necessity seemed so to require. It may be doubted whether Hooker could have been bred by any of the English schools of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: with all his imperfections, he bears notwithstanding a splendid testimony, (as even the best Roman theologians have acknowledged,) to the original learning and wisdom which dated its rise from the sixteenth century.

The growth of this original school of thought is to be traced to the contest between stiff traditional orthodoxy on the one hand, and the real errors which had fermented out of the corruption of religion on the other. Of such errors there is no lack of re-

cord.<sup>1</sup> Contemporary history abounds with them, and enough are to be found in the tracts of the day, when the press gained full liberty, to show what the pulpit was before the press supplanted it.

Whatever may be thought about the happy unity of belief in the middle ages, there can be no doubt that in the succeeding historical period, including the years immediately preceding the Reformation, there was a vast amount of wild misbelief abroad among the people, and perhaps among the mendicant friars: and that the abominable blasphemies of some of those whom the Protestant world has falsely called martyrs were but an indication of widely spread errors which only a few were bold enough to stand by. The cruelty<sup>2</sup> of their punishment has thrown a very false glare about these sufferers, which has mostly hindered writers from really analyzing the character of their assertions; but after making all allowance on this score, it does excite wonder that religious persons have been accustomed to view so lightly the dreadful character of the replies given in the examinations of many of these men as recorded by Foxe. If I was writing controversially it would be my duty to cite proofs of what I refer to, but otherwise my pen shrinks from placing such evidence afresh in print; and I prefer calling on any of my readers who doubt what I say to look through some of these examinations of "martyrs" and judge for themselves.

It was a natural consequence of these onslaughts on received doctrine that many minds should be driven into a stiff maintenance of all that had been so received, or at least of all that was called in question. Many who would at one time have fallen in with a reverent but reasonable sifting of such points as Transubstantiation, Purgatory, and the Adoration of the Virgin, were driven by their recoil from these fanatics into a more extreme position than perhaps they ever held before; as was the case with Sir Thomas More when he wrote his "Supplication of Souls." Wolsey, Fisher, Tunstal, even Gardiner were all at one time favourable to the more learned men who headed the advance party of the Reformation. It was Wolsey's great ambition to accumulate in his college all the most valuable learning of the day, and there is scarcely one of the early Reformers who did not receive countenance from the great Cardinal, while many were actually transferred by his means from Cambridge and foreign Universities to Oxford. Fisher, that good old man who has been so vilely treated by Mr. Froude, and stigmatised as an ignorant fanatic, was actually the means of giving Erasmus a position in England by securing his appointment to the Margaret Professorship of Divinity, and

<sup>1</sup> I can but just refer to such as were condemned by Archbishop Warham, for example. See Wilkins' Conc. iii. 729.

<sup>2</sup> There was a strange difference between those days and ours in respect to cruelty. Latimer begged hard to be placed near to Friar Forrest when he was roasted to death; and in general the fearful nature of such a death as burning seems to have been but little thought of by the spectators and those concerned.

afterwards to that of Greek ; and when the restless giant grew tired of his Professorship, Fisher appointed Dr. Richard Croke to succeed him, who if not actually a Reformer, was at least one whose learning assisted the Reforming party in no small degree. These patrons of a revived learning in England could hardly but be alarmed, however, when they saw the turn things were taking, and found that the extreme principles of Luther, and extremes even beyond his, were held and advocated by some of the very men they were fostering. Wolsey, never severe with any, spared as long as he could ; but even he was obliged to take notice at last of the hasty and unauthorised proceedings of such men as Bilney and Arthur at Cambridge, of Garrett, Dalaber, and others of whom Foxe makes "martyrs" at Oxford. And thus great men, bred under the Roman system, but by no means slaves to it, who would have willingly aided in a judicious, deliberate, and authorised Reformation of the Church, were alarmed into hugging that system more closely by the extravagances of those who without authority sought to turn upside down the whole order of Ecclesiastical polity and received doctrine. They were, in fact, driven to the position that many of us have been obliged to take up lately respecting a revision of the Prayer Book : they had no fundamental objection to Reformation, they even acknowledged that it was required ; but fanatic endeavours to turn Reformation of doctrine into a destructive elimination of Catholic truth made it seem unsafe at that time to do anything else than maintain the *status quo*. Perhaps they were right : perhaps they were wrong. It may be that a Reformation more fully entered upon at that time would have been free from those convulsive movements by which it was afterwards characterised ; and, especially under the guidance of Wolsey's wonderful mind for government, it might have peaceably and bloodlessly carried the nation at large in its wake.

4. Nor must it be forgotten that, between two extremes, which may be conveniently designated by their usual names of Romanism and Puritanism, there always existed a third or middle party, not in England only, (though there principally,) but almost all over Europe, who, while they were shocked at the Anabaptist heresies of the one side were yet far from endorsing the extreme statements of their opponents. Perhaps the greater proportion of the parochial clergy were of this class—a conservative body of men, not averse to legitimate changes made under lawful authority, as time proved, but anxious that such changes should be undertaken in a wise and conservative spirit, to secure and preserve the Church in its integrity, and not with the view of forwarding the objects of either the Puritans or their direct opponents of that day.<sup>1</sup> It was from among this class of men that Erasmus ob-

<sup>1</sup> It has been said by historical writers—perhaps was a current saying of his day—that half the secular clergy of England agreed in opinion with Wicliffe. A more

tained so many followers ; and that school of sound original thought of which he may be called the founder was principally recruited from their ranks.

From this (perhaps tedious, but yet necessary) review of the relative positions in which men stood with reference to their doctrinal opinions at the time which just preceded the Reformation, it will be seen that the tendencies towards a reconstruction of our doctrinal system must have been very strong even before they were drawn out by the accomplishment of England's independence ; and that when that was achieved, it became so far a necessity that it could not be resisted. Probably Wolsey himself had he been living and in power, would have been ready at once to take up the cue which he had dropped, and to try and lead the Church safely in her search for the true and just position which her new circumstances required her to occupy. It will also be seen that at the beginning of the Reformation the intellectual leaders of the Clergy were divided into two principal classes ; the one composed of Divines who walked in the track of their predecessors, caring little for originality of thought : the other composed of men equally learned who cared little for precedent so far as it rested on recent authorities, but wished, in the exercise of their own judgment, to act on precedents which were old enough to be free from bias towards either of the extremes which their own times had originated.

II. Leaving now the *a priori* view of the question let us take some examples of the course followed in the Reformation of doctrine with respect to some very fundamental questions.

The cause of the English Church has been so learnedly and so well advocated of late years that probably no controversial writer, well-informed in respect to its history and principles, will in future venture deliberately to accuse it of heresy. The Romanist argument against us is gradually being narrowed to the one point that we are not in visible communion with the Pope ; and we do not consider this a matter of vital importance. There need be but little said, therefore, in proof of the pious caution with which the Reformers continued the Creeds in their original integrity as the essence of Church of England doctrine. This is a glorious distinction between her and the Protestant communities of the Continent which originated at the time of the Reformation, that the very substance of her confession of faith is in the *ipsissima verba* of ancient Christendom ; and that she has not by a mere reception of the Creeds as an authority co-ordinate with recent and local confessions, tempted her children to look upon lightly at first, and afterwards

just way of expressing to our ears what was intended to be expressed by the saying would be that half the Parish Priests of England were—even in Wicliffe's days—more Anglican than Romanist. Wicliffe's impetuous disposition, and the controversial position in which he found himself, exaggerated his detailed conclusions beyond the limits of his own principles. Except in this exaggeration he was only one of a class which comprehended a large proportion of the parochial clergy.



to abandon, important portions of the truth which they declare. The Reformers, when they were providentially led to the translation of the services, (and in the translation of them to a reconstruction which also assisted in bringing them more within the knowledge and understanding of the laity,) were also providentially guided to set up in the midst of those services the ancient formularies which are the very bulwark of a sound faith, if they are, as the Eighth Article declares they ought to be, "*thoroughly received and believed.*" It was one of the ancient distinctions between the English ritual and that of Rome before the Conquest that the Nicene Creed was said in the Eucharistic service by the former Church in agreement with the Spanish and Gallican rituals: and the Sarum Breviary also directed the daily recital of the Athanasian Creed, while in the Roman it was and is enjoined on Sundays alone. When the denationalization of our ritual was set aside by the Reformation, our services were again distinguished by a more free public use of the Creeds; and that of the Apostles was directed to be recited openly and audibly, as the consentient declaration of the orthodox faith of the Church, twice every day. Must we not consider this as another of the many proofs existing that the reformation was neither an ill-considered nor a wilful series of changes in respect to doctrine; but that there was a real desire to maintain the Church in as strict analogy as possible with Catholic Christendom in its best times?<sup>1</sup> Nor will any one venture to assert that there is a single paragraph in the Book of Common Prayer which is not wholly and reverently subordinated to the primary truths declared in the Creeds.

Again, descend from the general doctrines of the Creeds to others of a more special kind, and let us see there too how the Reformation need little fear the charge brought against it of having injured the Catholic position of the Church of England.

1. Some changes were made, for instance, in the administration of Baptism. Whether they were wisely or unwisely made need not be discussed, such alterations as were made being of a ritual, not a doctrinal character; and extreme care being used that the *essentials* of Holy Baptism, water and the words of invocation, should be clearly asserted in theory and properly used in practice. Was any change whatever made by the Church of England in respect to the doctrine of Holy Baptism? This is a question which has been so much before the world for the last twenty years that a mere allusion to the works which have been written in defence of the doctrine of Regeneration is sufficient for my purpose. No one who has not grown up in the almost invincible obstinacy of Calvinism

<sup>1</sup> It is, perhaps, worth noticing that in the Catechism of the Council of Trent the exposition of the Creed occupies some hundred and fifty pages, and there are but two pages of that exposition—the one on the Pope as the necessary centre of Catholic Unity, and the other on the participation of merits in the Communion of Saints—which are not consistent with the more elaborate work of Bishop Pearson.

will be able henceforth to read the mind of the Church as expressed in the Prayer Book, and elsewhere, without seeing clearly that, (whatever his own opinion) the voice of the Reformation Church of England declares undoubtingly the same doctrine respecting the nature of man and the effects of Baptism that was held by the Church before the Reformation was thought of.

It was, in fact, a stock grievance with the Puritans that "ministers are obliged to pronounce all baptized infants regenerate by the HOLY GHOST," and that the "Church clearly teaches the doctrine of Baptismal regeneration," from the Hampton Court Conference to the last settlement of the Prayer Book.

2. If we consider the changes made in regard to the other sacrament, that of the Holy Eucharist, we are indeed compelled to take up other ground. In the case of Baptism there was no change to vindicate as far as the authoritative belief of the Church is concerned, but in this case an alteration was made in the form of the rite, by the introduction of Communion in both kinds; and also in the statement of Doctrine, by the repudiation of Transubstantiation. Was such a change wholly uncalled for, and unjustifiable? To go fully into a vindication of the Church of England would be the province of a complete history, not of a suggestive essay like the present; I shall therefore content myself with indicating a few of the leading points which I conceive most certainly to justify the Reformers in what they did.

First, with reference to the restoration of the Communion in both kinds to the laity. There is reason to think that the general denial of the Cup to lay people dates little more than a century before the Reformation age; and the custom at all of communion in one kind alone—except in clinical communion—was almost unknown before the twelfth century. Until the Council of Constance, in 1415, it had not been directed by any but individual Bishops; having, however, been a matter of warm discussion among the theologians of the middle ages, that Council decided in favour of the novel usage. But it was declared by Cardinal Bona as a fact fully acknowledged by "Catholics as well as sectarians" that it was the custom for all to receive in both kinds in ancient times. Moreover, only three centuries before the Council of Constance gave this decision in favour of so great an innovation upon the ancient practice of the Church, another Council, that of Clermont, presided over by Pope Urban II., in 1095, had given a decision directly the reverse, *obliging* all to receive in both kinds unless there was some good reason to the contrary: and a century later, in the year 1175, an Archbishop of Canterbury in Convocation forbade the new usage in its earliest form, that of giving the one species steeped in the other, a form which had already given discontent to the laity. When, therefore, the Reformers came to review the doctrines and usages of the Church, it could not fail but this usage—so import-

ant, and so closely connected with doctrine—should be taken into serious consideration: and since it was one which had been introduced against the wish of the Church at large, was so novel, and even contrary to the undoubted custom of the whole Church for twelve or thirteen hundred years out of the fifteen of its existence, no wonder that they came to the determination that they would restore to the faithful that of which they had been deprived. And certainly they had charity on their side: for if the laity think (and I hardly know why they should think otherwise) that they may receive the Holy Eucharist with more hope of the fulness of its grace if they receive in both kinds as the Church was accustomed to for so long, it is a grievous thing (without extreme necessity) to deny them the privilege they seek.<sup>1</sup> Strongly, however, as that generation seems to have felt on this subject, there is a clause in the Act of Parliament which enjoins the change, declaring “that this restoring the ancient practice with reference to the holy Sacrament must not be interpreted to the condemning the usage of any Church out of His Majesty’s dominions:” so anxious were the English Reformers to legislate for their own Church and that only. So exactly, moreover, did they act in this particular matter, that the proviso of the Council of Clermont,—except necessity required administration in one kind only,—was introduced even into the Act of Parliament. Prudence, charity, and deference to ancient authority, are, then, a justification of the Reformers in this as in other matters.

That Transubstantiation, or annihilation of the natural elements by their consecration for the Blessed Sacrament was as novel as a doctrine in the Church as communion in one kind was as an usage, I need not go on to prove. Nor, in the face of controversies so very recent, and so generally known among Church people, is there need to prove that the new definitions of the English Reformers were sound and Catholic. All I would ask of the Church historian is, that in writing a record of what was done at the Reformation towards a definition of the ancient doctrine of the Church, he will take the authoritative documents which were issued as the basis of his record and comment, and not the individual opinions of any one, however celebrated, of the Reformers. In the Office for the Holy Communion, in the Articles, in the Catechism, and in the Homilies may be found a doctrine as decided in respect to the pre-

<sup>1</sup> It was at the first re-introduction of communion in both species that the strong exhortations about unworthy receiving were introduced. A communicant who had not heard these read for some years, lately remarked that they were enough to frighten even regular communicants away from the altar, rather than to invite them there. No doubt it requires great indifference or a very well informed mind to take them otherwise. But when they were first directed to be used, persons were little accustomed to communicate and such cautions were necessary. An Act of Parliament against the depravation of the Blessed Sacrament was necessary for the same reason. Their utility at the present day is another question, which I need not enter into.

sence of CHRIST, as that is respecting Regeneration. And if there are some things to be regretted as consequences of the Reformation controversy on this subject, let us remember that it was *forced* upon the Church partly by heresies arising out of recoil from the strong statements of the Transubstantiationists, and partly by the formal reiteration of those strong and unjustifiable statements at the Council of Trent. Had that controversy never arisen the Church might have been more united, but it was not the Reformation which first broke ground in this terrible contest. Neither do the Formularies of the English and Roman Communions indicate the existence of any essential doctrinal differences between the Churches on this head. The difference, whatever it may be, resides simply in a definition; one that is, to say the least, superfluous, and the meaning of which is debated among Roman Catholics themselves.

3. Having thus vindicated the Reformers from the imputation of being rash innovators, seeking a change where no necessity drove them to it, and no finger of Providence pointed towards it, let us now go on to analyse the results which followed, as regards some other less conspicuous matters, disencumbering the *principles*, as before, from the *details* by which they are overwhelmed in our ordinary histories.

Perhaps the most important point of all that requires to be noticed in this view of Reformation history is, that in all the authoritative changes that were made there was no step whatever taken to interfere with or encroach upon the ancient ideal of the Church. The well-known definition contained in our Nineteenth Article of Religion, "The Visible Church of CHRIST is a congregation of faithful men," &c.,<sup>1</sup> is identical in the most essential part with the definition given by S. Thomas Aquinas: "Corpus Christi mysticum, quod est societas sanctorum;"<sup>2</sup> and the very words used in the Latin article, "cœtus fidelium," are to be found (among others) in Cornelius à Lapide, who says, "Jesus Christus per incarnationem despondit sibi ecclesiam, sive *totum cœtum populi fidelis*,"<sup>3</sup> where the "totum" serves to illustrate the meaning of the article itself, and to disconnect it from the false idea sometimes taken up by those who read the Thirty-nine Articles only in the English, and without consideration of the sources from which the original expressions were derived. So also in the Homilies: "The true Church is an *universal* congregation or fellowship of God's faithful and elect people, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the head corner-stone."<sup>4</sup> There was an evident care, therefore, on the part of the Reformers

<sup>1</sup> "Congregation," throughout the Articles, appears to be used for the *whole visible Ecclesia*, not in a temporising sense, as is sometimes supposed.

<sup>2</sup> Summa Theolog., p. iii., q. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Corn. à Lap. in Joann. iii. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Whitsunday. Second part.

to avoid those contracted notions respecting the Church which had been brought in by the rising Puritans, and they retained the current definition of the Church which was familiar to them in their earliest theological days, asserting as the primary idea thereof that it was "a congregation," the whole body, of "faithful people,"—of those "fideles," that is, known to the Church from the first—all who have been baptized.

If, moreover, we go on beyond this primary idea of the Church, and look for the Reformation principle in respect to the ministry of the Church, we shall still find those who had the guidance of the movement preserving the old theories unaltered. Take, for example, their loosest formula on the subject, the Twenty-third Article. It contains two principles which, if interpreted, as they ought to be, by the practical formulary of the Ordinal, and by the continuous usage of the Reformers, utterly repudiate all those modifications of theory on this subject which became necessary in the systems of Luther, Calvin, Knox, and the Anabaptists. It makes two declarations, the first, that no one may assume—non licet cuiquam sumere sibi—the office of public preaching and of administration of the Sacraments without legitimate call and mission; and the second, that such call and mission can only be legitimate when it proceeds from those upon whom such authority is devolved. If this is taken in connection with the Preface to the Ordination Services, and with the actual practice of the Reformers, it is quite evident that whatever individual Bishops or Clergymen might assert, the authoritative voice of the Church of England most distinctly repudiated any change from the ancient theory. "Men may not take the office of the ministry of their own authority," they say; "they may only take it when properly commissioned by those who have the power given them to call and send the Clergy to their work. No man can read the Bible and old ecclesiastical writers without seeing that the ministry has consisted of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons from the days of the Apostles until now; and that these orders of the ministry may be continued as they always have been, we enjoin these services to be used in 'calling' and 'giving mission' to every man who is to exercise the offices in question, and no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, (that is, no 'man shall publicly preach or minister the Sacraments,' or ordain, 'in the Church of England,) except he receives ordination in the form appointed.'" There is, indeed, one proviso, but one that makes the words of the Reformation still more definite and strong: it is that if he "hath had formerly *episcopal* consecration or ordination," then a man may exercise his office in the Church of England without going through the ceremony appointed: a proviso which, of course, excluded all those who claimed Presbyterian ordination as a qualification for the ministry, and admitted all who could prove themselves ordained by

a bishop, or consecrated canonically, to whatever Church they might previously have belonged. It is not necessary to point out that the substantial portions of our Ordinal are as practically in accordance with the old ordinals of the Church as the newly-stated theory is in agreement with the theory always acted on. Nor can there be any difficulty in showing that this theory of Orders maintained its ground against all assaults that were made upon it; for there seems absolutely to have been no hesitation or doubt upon the subject at the time when the new formularies were issued, the Reformed Church of England simply carrying on and perpetuating the theory, and, in substance, the practice, of the Church of England as it had been when in direct communion with Rome.<sup>1</sup>

The first principle of the doctrinal review of the sixteenth century was therefore one which committed the Reformers to the assertion of *essential continuity* between the Reformed and the unreformed Church of England by means of its ministry; and historical records (as, for example, in the case of Archbishop Parker's consecration) show us that practical care was taken by them to carry out in its integrity the theory which they stated upon paper. On the very first occasion, too, when a necessity arose for determinate action on the part of the Church and State in 1662; the result was that all who refused to be formally ordained to the office of the priesthood as thus recognised in the Church of England were prohibited from exercising in her Churches any of the duties to which they pretended; and this, too, at a dangerous crisis, when such decided conduct seemed likely to be almost ruinous, a second time, to the depressed Church. There is consequently no ground at all for the assertions which have been made from time to time by Romanists, Dissenters, and, alas! by Priests, Bishops, and Archbishops, to the effect that the Reformation standard of the ministerial office was less strict than that of the times preceding, or of the present Church of Rome. On the contrary, deviation from the old paths, so far as principles were concerned, seems never to have been thought of; or, if it was, extreme care was used that such deviation should not be made. So much depends upon this practical care that a Priest or a Bishop after the Reformation should be the same as a Priest or a Bishop before and in all earlier ages of the Church, that the point ought to be very carefully covered in any history of that period. Had it been so attended to, for instance, in the Church Histories, and Manuals which our own

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of Apostolical Succession was not asserted in terms at the time of the Reformation, because the point of original importance is that of Episcopal Ordination. If the necessity of this is granted, then the other follows as a corollary, and the only question is one of fact, i.e., as to the actual status of those who ordain in each successive ecclesiastical generation. If episcopal ordination is necessary, Bishops are necessary: and if those claiming to be Bishops *are* Bishops, the inheritance of the Apostolical succession is, of course, the result of being ordained by them.

day has seen published, we should hardly have heard the miserable evasions and misrepresentations with which the honest part of the world was afflicted at the time of the wretched Gawthorne's attempt upon the Archbishop of Canterbury's good-nature. But the Reformation ideal of the Church of England as a portion of the Universal Church composed of baptised persons, and ministered to by those only who have received episcopal ordination, has not always been the ideal which our Church historians have set before themselves. They have sometimes been more anxious to explain away the doctrine of the Reformation as interfering with the Protestantism of modern days; and have been more anxious to word their histories in a way that would not seem uncharitable to Dissenters, than to look simply at the *justice* which history, and especially the history of their own Church, requires at their hands.

This, then, was the ground on which the English Reformers acted with reference to the most essential features of the doctrinal review which they were obliged to undertake: it remains to notice some others of a less essential and fundamental character, but in respect to which a grave responsibility was thrown upon that generation.

4. Among the questions on which they were forced to come to a decided opinion, was that respecting the relative character of the rites which had been known by the corporate term of the "Seven Sacraments." In the later theology of the Pre-Reformation Church the number seven had been commonly assigned as that of the essential Christian rites; and very little, if any difference was made as to the comparative position of these as Divine institutions: but the arbitrary number by which they were classified was unknown before the days of Peter Lombard. As a convenient term of enumeration, applied to what were considered the principal spiritual channels of grace to man from the cradle to the grave, there was nothing to be said against this way of speaking; but if it was to be taken in a more strict sense, then the Reformers felt that explanations were necessary, to say the least. That the question underwent deliberate discussion we have proof yet remaining, in a well-known paper published by Bishop Burnet as No. 21, in Book III. of his Records, and also by Collier; and the sentence framed on that discussion,<sup>1</sup> is to be found in the definition of the Catechism, the XXVth Article of Religion, and the Homily on the Common Prayer and Sacraments. The Church of England by no means repudiates the idea of Seven Sacraments, but thinks it more convenient to restrict the customary use of so honourable a name to the two "generally," i.e. universally "necessary to salvation." And who can deny that when a necessity had arisen for

<sup>1</sup> In which they all agreed, by the by, that "the nature, effect, and virtue of all the seven, be contained in Scripture."

defining what a Sacrament is in its highest sense, the Church of England is more exact in this use of the term than the Council of Trent was in perpetuating the inexact application of one term to all seven of the rites in question?

Having already shown the course taken with respect to three of these seven, Holy Baptism, the Blessed Sacrament, and Holy Orders, it is not necessary to make any further remarks about them: let us therefore go on just to notice what was the doctrinal result of the Reformation after the other four had been brought under review. The terms in which the XXVth Article speaks of "those five commonly called Sacraments," do not decide the question whether or not the whole five were admitted to be of such importance that they were to be retained in use; nor does that Article show clearly whether it was meant to say, by the expression "that they had grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles," that the adjuncts of some or all of the five had so grown up, or that a part of the number—as Extreme Unction—was a corruption of Apostolic doctrine and practice. One inclines to the former view, and chiefly because no indication is given in the Article, or in the corresponding passage of the Homilies as to any differencing of the five; while there is a very plain indication that the late or scholastic theory of the five was thought "corrupt," or incorrect. If this is a true interpretation of the expression, then it must be held that the XXVth Article does not pass any censure whatever upon the doctrine that these "five commonly called Sacraments" are means of grace, but declaring generally that a corrupt theory had sprung up respecting them, implies that the particular doctrine respecting each is to be found elsewhere in the formularies of the Church.

What is to be found elsewhere respecting Holy Orders has been already shown, and also that there is absolutely no change of theory at least respecting the results which follow upon the use of the ordinance, although the Reformers declined to call it a Sacrament in the highest sense of the word. Confirmation must be put in the same category, with the exception that it cannot, as Orders, be directly assigned to CHRIST's own ordinance, however improbable it may be that the Apostles would have originated it without His express instructions. The Reformers did, however, in effect, retain with scrupulous care<sup>1</sup> that part of the rite of Confirmation which alone was considered by even the Mediaeval Church as essential to it as a Sacrament, the Imposition of a Bishop's hands. For although Chrism was used at the solemn adminis-

<sup>1</sup> Would that equally scrupulous care was used in carrying out their spirit by saying the words of Confirmation contemporaneously with the use of the action. But unfortunately many Confirmations of modern days have relapsed into an imitation of the Romanist practice at ordinations. In both cases the hands of the Bishop are laid on in silence, and the words afterwards spoken over the whole number.



tration of Confirmation in Churches, it was a by no means uncommon practice for Mediæval Bishops to confirm children brought to them as they passed along the road on their journeys; and there is one case on record in which a Bishop is censured for so administering the rite even without alighting from his horse. It is not to be supposed that Chrism was used on such occasions, and we must conclude that Imposition of hands was considered the essential and inalienable portion of the rite. That the Office has been so much curtailed is perhaps a matter for regret, but its curtailment is not of a nature to interfere with the effectual administration of Confirmation; nor, in reverent hands, with the due solemnity by which it ought to be characterized. If Confirmation is not what it should be in the English Church, the "living authorities" are the parties to bear the blame, not the revisers of our ritual and doctrine. It seems to be a very "corrupt following" of the *Reformers* to delay Confirmation for years after the conditions made necessary by them have been fulfilled: and there is cause to fear that many a baptized soul has been lost through that rule respecting age imposed in more modern times, which shuts out children from receiving the grace of Confirmation and of the Holy Eucharist when it is most necessary to build them up in their innocence, and withholds it until it is necessary to convert them from their sin. This is no injunction of the Reformers, nor can it be proved that it is a tradition derived from them. On the contrary, it is the impression of many that they would share in the grief and indignation which is often felt in respect to this corruption of their intention and practice, so inconsistent as it is with a simple and hearty faith in the grace of God given for holy living.

With respect to another of the five Sacraments of which I am speaking,—that of Penance—the same remarks apply which were made when speaking of the Holy Eucharist; the question of Confession and Absolution has been so fully discussed, and its continued use in the Church so clearly proved to have been the intention of the Reformers that I feel it unnecessary to repeat arguments which must be still fresh in the minds of my readers.

We then come to the fourth of the number, Holy Matrimony. And this may be disposed of very shortly by referring to two things which in themselves bear testimony to the wisdom and Catholicity of our service as it stands. The first is that fewer complaints have been made respecting the Marriage Service by Protestants than respecting any other portion of the Prayer Book, and that although facilities for connubial union in other ways have long been offered by our laws, not more than about one in ten of those (not Roman Catholics) who wish to marry, object to be married according to the rite of the Church of England. The second is, that, while the only substantial difference between us and Rome in respect to Holy Matrimony is as to its Sacramental position, the theories of Roman

writers vary so greatly as to what is the matter and what the form of the Sacrament as very much to confirm, without further argument, the conviction of the Reformers that it was not a Sacrament at all in the full definition of the term. Let me just add, further, that the rubric which declares that it is expedient for the newly married couple to receive the Blessed Sacrament as soon as may be—at the time of, or shortly after their marriage,—shows how desirous those who inserted it were that the very highest value should be set upon the Matrimonial Office, and the greatest solemnity attached to the bond contracted.

Lastly, a few words respecting the fifth of the number—Extreme Unction. That the mediæval and modern form of this rite is not identical with that mentioned in the Epistle of S. James and in S. Mark's Gospel, must, I think, be conceded by all. The latter was a means of recovery; the former is used in *articulo mortis* when recovery is supposed to be past expectation. Nor is it by any means clear, even in Roman writers like Bellarmine, that the present form of Extreme Unction, with its present object, dates further back than the twelfth century. As has been shown, however, the rite is not censured by the Twenty-fifth Article, though alluded to; and indeed, in the first book of Edward VI., a form for administering it was inserted. This form was omitted from the second book, and has never been restored; but I believe there is some difference of opinion as to the lawfulness or not of the usage since the omission in question. Being, as it is, so late an usage in the Church, and no proof existing that it really possesses the Sacramental character which it seems to possess, it can hardly be necessary to defend the Post-Reformation position of the English Church in respect to it; and the less as no formal repudiation of it is recorded. In my own humble opinion it is one of those usages by which, as from the sign of the Cross, a measure of grace may possibly be conveyed that will be for the good of those who receive it, but that it cannot be considered of any *primary* importance, and that much superstition and abuse are likely to attach themselves to its use with any but persons of very devout dispositions.<sup>1</sup>

5. Before concluding the subject of Doctrinal Reformation I shall be expected to say a few words concerning some of those articles of the mediæval faith which were distinctly and without reserve repudiated by the Church of England at the Reformation. One of these has been already referred to, viz., that which made visible communion with Rome absolutely necessary to the life of a Church; and we may pass on to two others, (1.) the Doctrine of Purgatory; (2.) the cultus of the Blessed Virgin and other Saints of God.

<sup>1</sup> The Paper before alluded to in Burnet's Records shows how much doubt the Reformers had on this question generally; and I do not remember any later theologian of note who has spoken positively on the subject. The general feeling seems to be that there *was* an Apostolic rite of extreme unction, but that the Roman form does not represent it.

It was well shown in the much-abused "Tract XC." that the Twenty-second Article very plainly condemns the "*Romish* doctrine concerning purgatory," but I forget whether it is noticed there that in the corresponding Article of an earlier date, the Twenty-third of Edward VI., that which was condemned was "The doctrine of the school-authors." When it is considered that the Reformers were perfectly well aware that from the second century at least, downwards, it had been the practice of the Church to pray for the dead, as if they were in a condition which admitted of improvement—not being one of perfect bliss: and also that S. Augustine for whom they had so great a reverence, with others of the "godly fathers," believed that the souls of the righteous undergo some purgation from the stain of sin in Paradise as their bodies do in the grave, it seems impossible to suppose otherwise than that the distinctive adjective here was used with a distinctive meaning; and that what it was intended to condemn by this Article was that exaggerated theory of punishment in the intermediate state which was *Romish* in its origin and *Romish* in all its abuses. For it was out of this doctrine that all that mechanism of "pardons" and "indulgences" arose which became a matter of shame to Christendom.<sup>1</sup> I will not stay to justify the Church of England in her repudiation of the *Romish* doctrine of Purgatory and Pardons, but will only express my wonder that any theologian and reasoner can be found who will attempt to justify a contrary conduct. The phenomenon is only to be explained on the ground of perfect outward submission both of will and intellect to every *dictum* sanctioned by the Popes: from which, may Heaven preserve us.

Again, in respect to the other doctrine mentioned, the *cultus* of the Blessed Virgin: it is certainly a marvel to find any who can be discontented with the *authorised* position of the Church of England on this point. We all know perfectly well that at the time of the Reformation and long since, there have been profane minds which have delighted in dishonouring the name of the Mother of our LORD, and the names of other saints also. But what sympathy or authority have such persons found in any document issued by the Church of England? Amidst all the provocations arising from the discovery of equal profanity on the other side in the direct adoration of her who, in all her purity and holiness, is not GOD, the Reformers reverently set apart two principal Festivals in her honour, those of the Purification and the Annunciation, and two minor or "black letter" festivals, those of the Conception and

<sup>1</sup> The wild extravagance of the system of indulgences may be illustrated by some conceded in the Sarum Hours of the Virgin. Paris: 1526. Sixtus IV. granted 11,000 years of pardon on account of one prayer said before one Image of our Lady; to another the old allowance of pardon was 32,755 years, which was doubled by this same indulgent Pontiff. Tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands were as little accounted of in the matter of indulgence granting for the future as they are by Dr. Darwin or the geologists in their speculations about the past.

the Visitation. In all their writings they spoke of the Blessed Virgin with the utmost reverence, and even so anti-Romish a prelate as Bishop Hall could write, "Blessed Mary, he doth not honour thee too much who maketh not a goddess of thee." What the Church did at the Reformation was to pay to the Blessed Virgin Mary the very highest respect and reverence, by giving up all that false adoration which dishonoured her, and was blasphemy towards God. If it can be proved that there was not any such adoration offered, let us accept the proof thankfully, but not one iota will the justification of those learned and prudent men be diminished who, with their senses about them, believed and were convinced that such adoration was common.

Nor do I believe that, in a later day, Bishop Pearson spoke more strongly than the Reformers would have done in respect to the veneration of ancient times for the Saints when he said, in his fourth *Concio ad Clerum*, "If we cut off all intercession of angels and saints for us who are living on earth, and contending with the host of evil spirits; if we acknowledge no power at all before the throne of God, on the part of those who poured forth their lives for CHRIST; if all those who venerated their relics (reliquias) are rejected and scouted by us, and we call them idolaters, . . . I know not what Church at all that can be with which it will be possible for us to hold communion."<sup>1</sup> But to make the saints the dispensers of the grace of God, as the Pre-Reformation prayers too often did, is no doctrine of the Catholic Church, and the Reformers did well to shut out such a notion for the future, as far as lay in their power.

Having now gone over all the principal matters connected with the Reformation of Doctrine in the sixteenth century,—as in former pages the changes in the Church of England were considered from a constitutional point of view—I have only to ask in conclusion whether there is not ample ground for vindicating the position that was then taken up by her, without conceding one iota of that Catholic doctrine and practice which we believe to be her true inheritance? We have a Mother to whom is owing not merely the respect which is her due because she is our parent; but who also claims our reverent and loyal love because she has in all things done her best to walk in the paths of orthodox holiness. God's good Providence guided her steps when unexampled dangers and temptations lay about her path: He restrained the officiousness of man, and cast it down when from the civil or the ecclesiastical throne it was interfering with the straightforward course in which He had bidden her to walk: He gave light and knowledge, even beyond their own consciousness of its possession, to those who were to strengthen her for her last and greatest stage of providential destiny: and we have no reason to doubt that His hand is with her still to lead her safely through present and future difficulties.

<sup>1</sup> Pearson's *Minor Theological Works*, ii. p. 54.

And the truth really is, that if we take diligent pains and a loyal heart to the reading of our ecclesiastical history in the sixteenth century, its lessons will give us a much better faith in the present stability and future destiny of our Church than many among us seem to possess, though not more than every one who is working in her ranks assuredly ought to have.

## ESSAY III.

## THE RITUAL ASPECT OF THE REFORMATION.

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THE Church of England has been singularly unfortunate in respect to the documentary materials by means of which the history of the Reformation ought to have been elucidated. In Queen Mary's reign there appears to have been a deliberate destruction of many records which might have assisted us to a more satisfactory account of the dissolution of the monasteries: at a later period the proceedings of Convocation during some centuries were swept out of mind by fire: the same element destroyed or irretrievably damaged many valuable papers in the Cottonian library during the present century; and within our own memory the original MS. of the Prayer Book has disappeared, no one knows where. Of these losses, that of the Convocation records is the one most to be lamented, as regards our present subject; as we should there, doubtless, have found the authoritative documents by which each of the successive changes that ensued at the Reformation might be identified as changes originating, at least, with the ecclesiastical portion of the State; and thus have secured an official contradiction to the popular but very false impression, that the Reformation was forced upon the Clergy by the civil power and public opinion, and so far as it was adopted by them, adopted against their will.

There is, however, one document of great importance remaining, (a document, too, which has the advantage of being accessible to every one,) and its tenour goes far to indicate the direction which the ecclesiastical mind of England took, and the principles which it made the foundation of all action in the changes that had become, through the causes I have already referred to, an absolute necessity. The Prayer Book at large is of course a full elucidation of this, for the *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi* is a rule which ought never to be lost sight of in judging of the Reformation; but the controversies of late days have shown that it is a long business to draw out this *lex* from the pages of our Common Prayer, however easy it might seem to be; and many, no doubt, have longed that the Reformers had actually stated, in so many words, what they were doing, rather than left us to draw out indirect evidence of their

deeds and their intentions in the manner we are mostly driven to resort to. The document to which I refer is, however, of this positive nature; and, as far as it goes, really does furnish us with what we want. For when those who set forth the Prayer Book added a *preface* to it, they must have done so from the feeling that it was necessary to offer some explanation, both to their own generation and also to posterity, of their reasons for doing what they had done; and to those reasons we may no doubt look as a general index of the principles by which the acting portion of the Church of England was guided.

As it now stands in our Prayer Books, this preface is a little calculated to mislead any who have not made themselves accurately acquainted with the historical phases of the book itself. What is now headed "The Preface," beginning, "It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England," and ending "truly conscientious sons of the Church of England," was introduced into the Prayer Book after the Great Rebellion, having been drawn up, it is supposed, by Sanderson, Bishop of Lincoln; and refers to those very few alterations which were made in 1662. That which had previously been headed "A Preface," beginning, "There was never anything by the wit of man so well devised," and ending, "that the people may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with him," was now entitled, "Concerning the Service of the Church," and placed immediately after the new insertion. Following this document is another, headed, "Of ceremonies, why some be abolished and some retained," originally—that is, in the First Book of Edward VI.—placed after the Communion Service, but in the Second Book of 1552 and all others adopted as a sort of second chapter of the Preface. These two earlier portions, which alone formed the Preface of the Prayer Book from 1549 to 1662, are the document to which I refer, as very clearly setting forth the principles on which the Reformers acted in the reconstruction of our Services; principles which, if they were adopted in the most grave part of their work, we may legitimately extend to the rest of their labours also.<sup>1</sup>

Some of my readers may be aware that this original Preface to the English Prayer Book has several points of identity with the preface to the reformed Breviary of Cardinal Quignonez, which was published at Rome in 1536, and appears to have been used in many places until it was condemned by Pius V., and superseded by the reformed Breviary of the Council of Trent. There is reason to think that this Breviary was used by the Reformers of our own Prayer Book to some extent; and the identity of expression evident in the two prefaces cannot certainly be accidental. Take three passages as an example:—

<sup>1</sup> I heard it suggested lately that every clergyman should be obliged to read this Preface concerning the Service and Ceremonies of the Church to his flock four times a year.

*Quignonez, 1536.*

“Nihil enim humano elaboratum ingenio, tam exactum initio unquam fuit, quia postea” . . .

“Nam libri scripturæ sacræ, statis anni temporibus legendi erant more majorum . . . vixdum incæpti omittuntur in alio breviario” . . .

“Accedit tam perplexus ordo, tamque difficilis precandi ratio, ut interdum paulo minor opera in requirendo ponatur quam, cum inveneris, in legendo.”

*Prayer Book, 1549.*

“There was never anything by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which, in continuance of time” . . .

“ . . . the ancient fathers . . . so ordered the matter, that all the whole Bible (or the greatest part thereof) should be read over once every year . . . but . . . commonly, when any book of the Bible was begun, after three or four chapters were read out, all the rest were unread” . . .

“Moreover, the number and hardness of the rules called the *Pie*, and the manifold changings of the service, was the cause, that to turn the book only was so hard and intricate a matter, that many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out.”

Here, then, is another proof that the acting representatives of the Church of England were by no means desirous (as Baxter was, at a later day<sup>1</sup>) of providing for its use a Prayer Book which should have the claim of *originality*. Even their justification of the step which they were taking in setting it forth at all, was partly translated from a Breviary reconstructed by a Roman Cardinal (a Spaniard, by the way), and which, from the approval given to it in the Bull of Paul III.,—“Summa cura et diligentia recognovit, atque ad veterum Sanctorum Patrum Conciliorumque constituta ac meliorem precandi ritum et normam faciliorem breviorisque redegit,”—was probably intended to be gradually introduced into all the churches which owned the authority of Rome.

I. Now if we inquire, Why need the services of the Church have been altered at all? we find, in this Preface to the Prayer Book, an answer to the question, at least so far as the judgment of those who wrote can be taken. There are eight separate charges brought against the received order of the Service, which are so distinctly named, that I shall put them down in order.

1. It is alleged that a very corrupt habit had sprung up, and had even established itself for “many years past” in the manner of using the appointed Lections or Lessons taken from Holy Scripture. The original intention of the Church being “that the whole

<sup>1</sup> Baxter knocked up an entirely new Prayer Book, as a rival to the old one, in a single night. If the whim had taken him, he would have re-written the Bible in a fortnight, no doubt.



Bible (or the greatest part thereof) should be read over every year," this intention had been thwarted, and the order "altered, broken, and neglected;" so that when a book of Holy Scripture—as Isaiah, for example, in Advent, or Genesis in Septuagesima—was begun to be read, three or four chapters were read out, and all the rest left unread; the unread portion being superseded by "uncertain stories and legends." Mention is also made of a multitude of "responds, verses, vain repetitions, commemorations, and synodals," as interfering with the continuous reading of Holy Scripture. Of the responds and verses, only the Gloria Patri after the Psalms, the Kyrie after the Commandments, and the versicle before and after the Gospel were retained in the English Prayer Book. A more free use of such responds as give the key-note to the portion of Scripture read would have been an improvement, some think, on the present form of our Lessons;<sup>1</sup> but their use was carried to an extravagant length in mediæval times, and there is no reason to think that the other things complained of as interrupting the due reading of Scripture are complained of unjustly.

2. These uncertain stories and legends in the place of Holy Scripture were no imagination of the Reformers. Even the modern Roman Breviary will show this;<sup>2</sup> but they are mentioned by Cardinal Quignonez in his preface with more severity, by far, than by the Reformers of the English Church, for he says of the old Breviaries that "*historiæ sanctorum quædam tam incultæ, et tam sine delectu scriptæ habentur in eodem, ut nec auctoritatem habere videantur nec gravitatem.*" They did not, therefore, stand alone when they looked upon these insertions as unmeet to be used in the service of the sanctuary, much less to supersede the Divine writings themselves.

3. They make the very reasonable statement that the Service having been read in Latin these many years, a language which the people did not understand, the latter heard with their ears only, and their heart, spirit, and mind were not edified thereby: which is really such a very obvious remark, that one feels the only question open to an opponent of the change was, Whether the people

<sup>1</sup> Though of course there is a danger in such responses that they may give a *false* note. Such a danger is referred to in the Preface of the Reformed Benedictine Breviary, "*ad usum congregationis Sancti Mauri,*" published at Paris, in 1787; so that there are two sides to this question also.

<sup>2</sup> A later reformed Breviary than that of Trent, one edited (in 1713) for the diocese of Meaux by the successor of Bossuet, speaks of such legends in a tone evidently intended to reflect, though cautiously, on the Roman Breviary. Stating the various alterations made, the Preface goes on to say: "*Absunt non solum aperte falsa, sed et apocrypha, ut reddentes Deo vitulos labiorum nostrorum veritatem faciamus, et loquamur coram illo, qui summa veritas est, et querit qui adorent eum in spiritu et veritate. Nam religio, sancto Augustino teste, non debet esse in phantasmatis nostris, et melius est quodcumque verum, quàm quicquid pro arbitrio fingi potest. Quapropter ex præscripto Concilii Africani in Capitulis Regum Francorum vetitum est, ne falsa nomina martyrum, et incertas sanctorum memorias, fideles venerantur. Quin et Innocentius III. negat falsitatem sub nomine pietatis tolerari debere.*"—*Breviarium Meldense. Meldis, 1713.*

need be edified by the service? Those who thought then, or who think now, that the *whole* force of Common Prayer consists in the utterance of it by the priest, and that there is no subordinate additional force derived from the vocal and intelligent participation in it on the part of the people, would no doubt consider that the latter were in quite as good a position for edification when the service was said in a tongue unknown to them as when said in their own language. This, however, the Reformers did not think: and reasons have been already shown for believing that the whole feeling of the Church of England went with them in the change of language which they effected.<sup>1</sup>

4. The same kind of complaint which was made respecting the Lessons is also made as to the recitation of the Psalms. It is alleged that "Notwithstanding that the ancient Fathers have divided the *Psalms* into seven portions, whereof every one was called a *nocturn*, now of late time a few of them have been daily said, and the rest utterly omitted:" which was as gross a departure from the spirit of Catholic ritual as anything possibly could be. The explanation of such a strange omission is probably to be found in a fact which is strongly brought out by the Preface of Cardinal Quignon's Breviary. He alleges that the reason which had chiefly moved him to rearrange the hours of the Church were that both the clergy and the laity were deterred from their use by their length and difficulty. The hours of prayer in England were practically reduced to two long offices before the innovations of the Reformers: and there can be no doubt from their remark about the omission of the Psalms, which formed the chief portion of them, that the hours left unsaid at the usual time were not added on to the other services which were said, but were left out altogether. Their complaint was therefore just, that this was an infringement both of Catholic spirit and Catholic practice.<sup>2</sup>

5. The complexity of the service is a fifth reason which they allege as causing a necessity for change. Upon this point there is little to be said; for many will think it legitimately open to question whether this was really a difficulty of much importance. The evil, if it was one, would have been in no small degree remedied by the other changes necessitated: and the Reformers carried their simplification of the service, as well as of the rubric, further than some would think necessary. Yet it is observable that the very same objection to the old Breviaries is made by Quignon, and in

<sup>1</sup> The change in our ecclesiastical language was by no means so sudden as is sometimes supposed. Although printed Breviaries had issued from the press during (probably) every year of the century up to 1535, none were printed at all for six years after that date; while at the same time Primers, the Holy Bible, the Litany and portions of the Communion Service, all in English, were gradually paving the way (by royal authority endorsing the work of Convocation) for the general use of our native tongue in the offices of the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Neale gives another explanation in his recent Commentary on the Psalms, p. 19, viz., that the recurrence of Festivals with their proper Psalms was so frequent, as to push aside a full half of the regular recitation.

the very same words as those used by the writers of our own Preface.

6. Next, the Reformers congratulate themselves and the Church on the substitution of one uniform Prayer Book according to the "use of the Church of England," for the various books "according to the use of Salisbury, Hereford, Bangor, York, and Lincoln," which had authority in different districts of the country: a substitution of uniformity for diversity which the course of Western Christendom has since then abundantly adopted, and perhaps justified.<sup>1</sup>

7. In respect to the Ceremonies in use, two principal objections are offered, the first of which is that of those "which had their beginning by the institution of man," (as distinguished from such a ceremony as that of Baptism which was instituted by CHRIST and is absolutely binding on the Church) some of which had been appointed with good intention, and had been profitable at first, had yet in later days become vain and superstitious: were growing more and more abused, and while they blinded the people, obscured the glory of God. These it was thought desirable to put away altogether, simply on account of their abuse: and a precedent was assuredly to be found for such a course by the total abolition of such "ceremonies" as love-feasts at a much earlier age of the Church.

8. A second reason for reducing the number of Ceremonies was that they had so accumulated as by their great excess and multitude to have become quite insupportable: the meaning, too, of many being utterly lost.

These then, were some of the more cogent reasons which moved the English Church of the sixteenth century to review the whole system of its divine worship: and if there was to be any change at all, it is difficult to see how they could avoid making such as are indicated. But, of course, it is quite possible that we might agree with the Church of that day in thinking that the things which they mentioned as abuses really required reformation, and yet not agree as to the principles on which they should be amended. The Lutherans abroad and the Calvinists at home agreed with our Convocation as to the abuses, but their remedy was of a very destructive nature: let us examine therefore the course taken by Convocation, so far as it is elucidated by our Prayer Book Preface.

II. First it is to be noted that they speak of their work in a thoroughly conservative spirit, and although they are pointing out the corruptions which had arisen in the ritual and ceremonies of the Church, are far from using towards them the contemptuous language which we are accustomed to associate with the names of the more notorious Reformers. The reckless buffoonery of Latimer's sermons, and his wild condemnation of everything that had been

<sup>1</sup> The Sarum Breviary (as reformed in 1516) had already been enjoined throughout the province of Canterbury by the Convocation of 1542.

connected with Rome, has no counterpart, nor shadow of counterpart in the language adopted by the learned and serious-minded men who composed the document in question. They speak respectfully of the preceding Breviary of the Church, and say that it had only met with the fate of every human device in being corrupted: and all they wish to do is to recur as far as possible to the original substance of the Church's Common Prayer, making such alterations as were necessary for the altered circumstances of the times; as for instance, in the adoption of the English language instead of the Latin, now that the various tongues spoken in the land had all become amalgamated into one.

They therefore refer to the "ancient Fathers,"—"the godly and decent Order of the ancient Fathers" as the authority to which they wish to appeal, and by which they wish to be guided. This expression has mostly been interpreted, probably, of those whom it is our custom at this day to call the "Fathers,"—the great ecclesiastical writers of the first six centuries; but this is certainly a mistake, for with the exception of S. Gregory the Great, there are none of these whose names are so especially connected with the ritual of the Church, (not even S. Ambrose,) that they could be definitely appealed to as general authorities in such matters as those of which the Reformers were writing. Moreover, the very first reference to their authority is with respect to the Lessons, (just as Quignon uses "*more majorum*" in the same way,) and so far as can be judged there was no more ground at the time of the Reformation for ascertaining what the practice of the early Church was as to the reading of Holy Scripture during Divine Service than there is now: and certainly our modern information does not enable us to say so plainly that we are following the authority of the Primitive Church.<sup>1</sup> But it was not to the Primitive Church that the Reformers appealed in matters of ritual. They evidently meant by the "old Fathers" the ancient Church of England before it came to be encrusted with the successive accretions of mediæval times; and what they called the "mind and purpose" of these "old Fathers," the model to which they wished to conform the New Prayer Book, was the nucleus which they thought themselves able to discover as the original central and fundamental portion of the English ritual; not perhaps very round and definite, but sufficiently evident to enable them to exercise that power of conscientiously separating the ancient from the novel, to which they were devoting their energies.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The first movement towards a return to ancient practice in the reading of Holy Scripture was made so long as thirty-three years earlier, when in the revised Sarum Breviary of 1516 the length of the daily Lessons was considerably increased, and many of the Responses, &c., which broke up the chapters, expunged from the service.

<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Parker's well known anxiety to ascertain and make known the belief and practice of the Anglo-Saxon Church is another illustration of the spirit by which the Reformers were actuated.

And it must be remembered that this Preface was written for the original Prayer Book of 1549, in which the services bore a much more strict resemblance to the ancient services of the Church than they do at present. We are dealing now with the early Reformers, and must take their words in the relation which they bore to the Prayer Book as they set it forth. A little inspection of the tables of comparison given by Mr. Freeman in his *Principles of Divine Service*,<sup>1</sup> or by Mr. Procter at the end of his *Rationale of our Offices*, will show that the words used by those who wrote the Preface are honestly expressive of the work which they did; and that the first book of Edward VI. was nothing more nor less than the old Breviary and Missal Offices translated, with a re-arrangement of the Scriptural portion, and the expulsion of such novelties as were connected with the adoration of the saints, purgatory, the distinctively mediæval theory respecting the annihilation of the elements in the Eucharist, and the assumed authority of the Pope. I do not say that the Reformers had any ancient Breviary before them in which these novelties were wanting; but what I allege is that they exercised their power of criticism to eliminate them and them only, and that it was as much, at least, their wish to retain all that was really Catholic, as it was to expunge all that was merely Roman. They tried to discover "the mind and purpose of the old Fathers" of the Church of England, with the object of moulding the Book of Common Prayer according to it, just as we try to discover for our own guidance the "mind and purpose" of those who by the lapse of time have become "old Fathers" to us of this generation. There was probably as good reason for them to pass over their immediate predecessors when they wanted ecclesiastical and ritual precedent as there is for us to pass over the last century or two and go back to the fifteenth. The distortions of Catholic ritual were in a different direction, perhaps, at the two periods; but they have a considerable resemblance in their origin; and it is probable that the Reformers had as good reason to complain of foreign influences acting on the Church of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as we who come after the days of William of Orange, the Hanoverian kings, and a race of political bishops.

The conservative principles of the Reformers were then very deeply laid, even deeper than has been represented by those who have supposed that they made the Primitive Church their model in the changes which they introduced. Such a far off model, and one so difficult, (at least in those days) to get at, they did not set before them; but it was their great anxiety to continue the traditions of the Church of England itself in their purity. They did not point to any particular age, and say, This is what we will adopt; but they took out of the current ritual of the Church of England whatever they had reason to think was the true growth of

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I. p. 288.

Catholic usage; and with some little, but not much, concession to the specialities of that particular time, they framed the Prayer Book of 1549 as the true Catholic representative of the ancient Breviaries of England. Subsequent criticism, with the great additional light it has had, may have discovered that they made a few mistakes—chiefly of omissions; but the student who goes fairly to investigate the result of their labours will soon acknowledge that the critical discrimination of the Prayer Book revisers of 1548 was quite equal to the work set before them; and also that they honestly acted up to the principle which they had laid down, that of making our ritual “agreeable to the mind and purpose of the old Fathers”—of those generations of the Church of England to which they could look as representing it when unencumbered by mediæval peculiarities and fancies. To me it appears that this is a point of no small importance. In the first place it shows what the intention of the Reformers originally was, viz., to link on the reconstructed offices to those which had always been used in England, without any further changes than were made necessary by the return we were making to the normal constitutional and doctrinal character of the Church. It was no wish of theirs to break away from the line of their forefathers, or to originate such a novelty as an isolated Church. The former they took care not to do; and if the latter was a consequence of their work, it was not a result which should justly have followed, but which was brought about by the unreasonableness, worldliness, and want of policy by which the acts of the Roman court were characterized. And, secondly, it is to be noticed, that although subsequent alterations of the original Prayer Book were made (out of a spirit of concession to the pressure used by men who possessed great temporary influence with the king and his advisers) the Preface remained substantially unchanged, and has been handed down to us as being still the legal exponent of the Principles on which the Prayer Book was reconstructed. If those who set forth the second book of Edward VI. went upon different principles, nothing has come down to us imposing *their* principles upon us; and the retention, even by them, of the words of their predecessors in revision seems to show that whatever concessions they had been obliged to make, they still adopted or wished to adopt the same rule of deference to the old continuous traditions of the Church. At any rate the tendency of revisions, since that Second Book, has always been to recur to the first work of the Reformers as the real standard of Church of England ritual; and the principles on which that standard was constructed are therefore fastened upon us both by the force of their re-assertion, and by the subsequent practical expressions of the authoritative mind of our Church.

Having thus seen that the acting portion of the Church of the sixteenth century did really leave on record, in so many words, the

view which they took of their position and duty as Reformers of ritual, let us now go back for a short time to our examination of the manner in which they carried out their avowed principles, that we may see what degree of consistency there was between their words and their deeds.

1. In all the changes that they made with respect to "ceremonies," they were as careful to retain the old idea of *Worship* as they had been to retain that of *Church* and *Priesthood*. There appears to have been no synodical act of the Church of England by which any variation whatever was enjoined, either from the ancient form of the fabric, or the application of its various parts. The destruction of altars was no act of the Church, but of a tyrannizing monarch or a tyrannizing bishop: and the same may be said of whatever changes took place in regard to the magnificence or number of sacred utensils; with the addition that many unauthorised thieves helped to make more ruinous the ruin which the thieves authorized by Henry VIII. and Edward VI.<sup>1</sup> had begun. To the eye and intention of those who reformed our ritual, its practical use presented hardly any outward variation of importance. If there was any dispute about stone altars, about their elevation above the ordinary level of the building in which they were situated, about their dignified and sumptuous decoration; such disputes did not originate with the Church, and alterations arising out of them were not ratified by the Church. It has been proved by the decision of our highest courts that the second year of Edward VI., (which is our present authorized standard of ritual accessories) was characterized by the lawful and enjoined use of all such utensils and ornaments of previous days (both for the Church and Clergy) as were consistent with the modified form which the ancient Breviary had taken in the new Book of Common Prayer: such, for instance, as Altar Crosses for the one and vestments or Chasubles for the other. And although many unconstitutional invasions of the privileges of the Church in this respect,—outrages upon the law of the land,—took place during that unhappiest of tyrannies when our country realized the words "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child;" yet even those assaults upon the sumptuousness of our worship did not suffice to efface the continuous tradition of the Church itself, that "the Chancels shall remain as they have done in times past." At this distant day, we have seen that it is a question of *expediency* only, whether or not a very sumptuous character shall be given to Divine Service by means of its accessories: that the law of the Church as laid down by the Reformers was little else but a reassertion of its ancient customs; and that this law, (ratified and confirmed by the civil power) actually *enjoins* upon us even now an

<sup>1</sup> In the Journal of Edward VI., written by himself, there is an entry that he has had four dishes for his table made out of "church-stuff, as mitres, and golden missals, and crosses, and reliques of Plessay."—*Burnet's Records*, Vol. ii. p. 39.

elaborate form of ritual, accompanied by all that can be wished of magnificence and beauty. That we do not obey the law is to be attributed to various causes : but our disobedient practice must not be taken as the measure of the ritual provided for the Church of England by the care of its authoritative synodical representatives at the time of its reformation. Perhaps nothing would astonish the Reformers so much as to see the character given to Divine worship in some of the churches with which they were familiar. They would certainly repudiate with indignation the assertion that such a character was in accordance with their own wishes and principles : and would protest against such a deviation from "the mind and purpose of the old fathers," with far more indignation than they exhibited against any part of the ceremonies of the Church which they had "put away because the great excess and multitude of them" had "so increased that the burden of them had become intolerable." More intolerable still to them would be the absence of almost all ceremony from Divine Service, and its reduction to a form which had never entered into their imagination as possible in the Church of England. Our deviation from the Reformers in this respect is immensely greater than was their deviation from the Church of mediæval days. "The simplicity of our Reformed Worship," is a phrase often in use among us, but one totally inapplicable in the sense in which it is used, to the worship instituted by the Reformers. Such "simplicity" has never been sanctioned by the Church of England, any more than the simplicity of a Quakers' meeting-house.

It is a great injustice to the Church to father upon it, as if they were its law, the inclinations and practices of individuals. It may be there have always been some persons—always, perhaps, since the Reformation began—who have preferred an undemonstrative service, such as that which is called "simple," to an ornate one in which taste and beauty are made the handmaids of the sanctuary ; and who have acted accordingly. But let us call things by their right names. Such an undemonstrative form of service was not originally contrived by the Reformers, but by their Puritan opponents ; and has no claim whatever to be called the service of the reformed Church of England, that being of a very ornate kind in nearly all its details.

2. In accordance with this course of action, the Preface of the Prayer Book goes on to defend the use of ceremonies against prejudices which had already risen among the Puritans. Some such, they declare, there must necessarily be, if the Apostolic precept is to be observed, "Let all things be done among you in a seemly and due order," and they condemn with some expression of indignation those who "be so new fangled, that they would innovate all things, and so despise the old, that nothing can like them but that is new." Such Puritans they found it impossible to satisfy ; they



were even more impracticable than the intensely conservative party who thought that every small ceremony of their own day was so binding upon their consciences that nothing could be changed without a violation of duty. The obvious course was, to disregard both extremes, and looking to no party, making it no part of their object to please or satisfy unreasonable men, to set before themselves as the true end of their labours the real glory of God and the real profit of His Church.

In carrying out this determination it was manifestly not a necessary part of their duty to wipe out from the Church's service every ceremony that had been hitherto in use, and invent new ones, but rather to make a selection of those which they thought suitable for the object which they had in view. This accordingly they did, so that there is not a single ceremony enjoined in the Prayer Book (so far as I can remember) which had not been previously in use under the reign of the unreformed Breviary. And in making this selection it is very distinctly asserted that the more ancient had the preference; as drawing nearer, (no doubt their reason was,) to that fountain of orthodoxy to which they appealed, the customs of the "ancient fathers."

Far too little importance is given to the fact that the Reformers made very exact provisions for continuing the tradition of the Church in respect to her daily worship; and yet, though dreary times have elapsed between then and now, there have never been wanting in any of those ten generations, men carefully acting up to the intention of the Church, and so continuing the tradition down to our own times of revival.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to ascertain what was the ordinary parochial practice of the times preceding the sixteenth century in respect to daily services. The hours were used, more or less completely, in the monasteries; and mass was celebrated every morning in the Cathedrals. There were also a multitude of chantry priests, who celebrated mass for the departed either in chantries, or at the altar of the parish churches, as often as the endowment under which they acted provided for. I do not think there is evidence that daily mass or daily service of any kind was universal in parish churches, independently of these chantry endowments; though I have in mind a curious endowment by Henry VIII. himself, which is made contingent upon the attendance of the recipients at "daily service" in the church of the parish

<sup>1</sup> Archdeacon Basire, after his return from exile in 1670 makes the following entry in his journal.

"Residence in Stanhope, above 3 moneths, 100 days.

"Residence at Eaglescliffe, 3 moneths, 90 days.

"*Daily Publick Prayers*, and constant Sermons in both every Sunday and Holy Day."—*Life and Correspondence of Dr. Basire*.

I believe the daily service at Holy Trinity, Hull, was *never* intermitted: and the continuous usage of our Cathedrals, except during the Rebellion, is known to every one.

to which it was given.<sup>1</sup> However this may have been, it was certainly the intention of the Reformers that the hours, as they had condensed them into Matins and Evensong, should be used day by day in every Church and Chapel, and probably they were continuing what was really the most ordinary form of daily service in doing so. They also made distinct provision for the daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist; and if it had been up to their time the custom of Parish Churches in general, they placed no restriction upon such custom beyond that which was necessary to ensure the abolition of solitary masses; "in chapels annexed, and all other places, there shall be no celebration of the LORD's Supper, except there be some to communicate with the priest." But on Wednesdays and Fridays, and "all other days, whensoever the people be customably assembled to pray in the Church, it was directed that the Communion Service should be read by the priest, properly vested in albe, and cope, or chasuble, as far as the Offertory, if there were no communicants;" clearly implying that it was to be said throughout, if any offered. The provision respecting the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel of the week clearly points to the probability of a daily celebration, as does also the injunction,—alas! how neglected,—that "in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, and *Colleges*, where there are many Priests and Deacons, they shall all receive the Communion with the Priest every Sunday *at the least*, except they have a reasonable cause to the contrary."

Thus, although the ancient "hours" were no longer to be enforced, (although perhaps all the *day* hours are represented by the Matins, Litany, and Evensong,) yet strict injunctions were given

<sup>1</sup> The conclusion of that portion of the Preface, "Concerning the Service of the Church," as now printed, contains three provisions: (1) That the Morning and Evening Prayer, if said *privately*, may be said in any language understood by those who say it; (2) That all Priests and Deacons (Bishops not being named) are to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, *privately* or *openly*, not being hindered by sickness or any other urgent cause; (3) That it is to be used in every Parish Church and Chapel by every priest having cure of souls. The second and third of these provisions were not inserted in the first Book of Edward VI., but in the place of them a clause to the effect, that no man shall be bound to the saying of these daily Prayers, "but such as from time to time, in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, Parish Churches, and Chapels to the same annexed, *shall serve the congregation*." If this latter represents the old rule, the more recent one would seem to be the stricter. In 1541 was issued "An explanation of Ceremonies to be used in the Church of England," in which it is said, "It is laudable and convenient, that (except sickness, or any other reasonable impediment, or let) every bishop, priest, and others having orders, and continuing in their administration, shall daily say Divine service, (i.e.,) Matins, Prime, Hours, Evensong, and Compline; and such as are Bishops and Priests, divers times to say mass; and that they may say it oftener, they ought to pray for grace, and dispose themselves accordingly." (Collier, part ii. book iii. 197.) The word "privately" was first introduced into Edward VI.'s second book. Wheatley, and other commentators on the Prayer Book, interpret it of the priest's family: but in our own day it is more frequently considered to mean *solitary* recitation of the Daily Services by Priests and Deacons as distinguished from public. It is certainly strange that those who abolished solitary masses so strictly should enjoin solitary Matins and Evensong.

that the voice of the Church should rise in every parish day by day; and provision made that wherever two or three should meet together desiring to receive the Holy Eucharist as their "daily bread," they should by no means be denied the privilege.

From this document then, the Preface to the Prayer Book, we see what was really the "mind and purpose" of those who lawfully represented and acted for the Church of England in the revision of her ritual. They did not seek to make any change for the sake of change. Certain principles were laid down in respect to what was necessary and what was expedient. (1.) It was, one may say, forced upon them, by God's Providence, to give to the people their ritual in their own language. (2.) It was necessary to put away some usages and some prayers because they were connected with doctrine of late introduction, by which the Church of England would no longer permit herself to be held in bondage. (3.) It was expedient to put away others, because though not otherwise objectionable, they had become the medium of superstition, and the abuse had made the good use of them almost impossible. But in acting upon these first principles, the Reformers used great care to make as little substantial alteration as possible. They looked upon the old Church and its old usages with the greatest respect, and had no sympathy with those who did otherwise. Least of all had they any notion of taking up a position of antagonism to those portions of the Church which still adhered to the current usages of the day. The term Protestant was then and afterwards deliberately ignored, and they declare that "in these our doings we condemn no other nations, nor prescribe anything but to our own people:" with other words of a like moderate tone. And in the midst of all their work we may trace their extreme anxiety that none should have fewer opportunities than hitherto for worshipping God, or for receiving that grace which they, as much as the Churchmen of older days, considered to be the life of every Christian soul.

Thus as in constitution and doctrine, so in ritual also, the Reformation of the Church of England was thoroughly conservative of established principle; the one chief endeavour of those who conducted it through its various stages being to lop off only such branches of the old tree as were diseased or decayed, to prune away such new growth as weakened it, and to leave the Church standing in its ancient grandeur full of youthful life and vigour, and good for many a long century to come. May she "hold that fast which" she hath, "that no man take" her "crown."









